

Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

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Anarchy

A Journal of Desire Armed

Domestic Violence

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Representation

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It's about Time:

Schooling as Oppression

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An Interview

with Ursula Le Guin



"Future Fears" by Richard Mock

The Post-Left Anarchist Debate

Reviews include:

The Malay Archipelago, Late Victorian Holocausts,
From Bakunin to Lacan, & Direct Action: An Historical Novel



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The Fear of Individual Freedom in the Radical Milieu



Anarchy is a process of individual *and* social freedom, at least according to the vast majority of those who have advocated it as a personal and collective goal. As a result of this comprehensive commitment to genuine freedom, on both personal and collective levels, anarchists have historically been chastised or ridiculed by nearly all those on the political left—from liberals to socialists to communists—afraid of genuine freedom on any level of experience. But the most vicious, irrational and scandalous of leftist denunciations have most often focused on condemning anarchist ideas and practices of personal, individual freedom.

This is because the anarchist commitment to genuine individual freedom is one of the definitive differences that sets anarchists apart from the political left, while at the same time it is often the most threatening difference to leftist ideologues. The commitment to genuine individual freedom of thought and action here and now directly confronts not only the complicity of the entire political left with political authority and institutionalized repression, but also exposes each individual leftist's fear of the practice of personal freedom and autonomy in their own and in others' lives.

The whole spectrum of positions which make up the political left shares both a theoretical and practical commitment to *political collectivism*—in the sense of the privileging of social organization over individual freedom. This includes even some left-anarchists, at least those who put their leftism above their commitments to anarchism. Most forms of leftism—except for the most authoritarian of Marxist and nationalist variants—still claim to put a high value on individual freedom. But this claim is intentionally illusory. It is never meant to be taken seriously, except in the most superficial or relative of ways. This is because leftists consciously delegate their own personal sovereignty over their lives to some level of political collectivity: whether this political collectivity be a political party, a political organization, an abstract conception of social class or the People, or the nation-state itself.

Too afraid to conceive of a world in which they might live with other people as masters of their own individual and collective fates, they renounce sovereignty over their own lives and in so doing identify with the patriarchal (or in some instances, with the matriarchal) power of a social group. Unable to conceive of any forms of social organization in which concrete human individuals retain their freedom in voluntary, unforced, mutually negotiated unions, they pledge their allegiance to an ideological organizationalism which demands that all must subordinate their individual lives to the greater good of the "social" or of "society"—as expressed in particular forms of organization depending upon the

variant of leftism involved.

Those who have consciously renounced their personal sovereignty are naturally keen to make sure that everyone else does so as well—one way or another, whether through ideological conversion, threats or force. Once one's identity becomes closely tied to a particular



form of political organization (or even an abstract idea of Class or Society), the most threatening *other* becomes the unbeliever or heretic who refuses to subordinate her or his life to the political organization and/or ideological ideal to which one has surrendered his or her own sovereignty. This is one of the most primal of the reasons why anarchists are so often automatically feared and attacked: anarchists attempt to stand on their own—proud and free, unbowed by the demands of political authorities and ideolo-

gies. And to make the threat even more acute, anarchists invite (and actively seduce) others into joining their guiltless subversion of *all* powers-that-be.

We can see the resulting fear of personal, individual freedom even within the anarchist milieu itself when too many left-anarchists incoherently denounce the concrete human individual as necessarily being, instead, an "abstraction," against which the supposed concrete reality of their conception of "society" is poised. Of course, either the "individual" or "society" can be conceived and employed in ideological ways (usually non-contextual or ahistorical ways). But for those committed to renunciation of their own personal sovereignty, only the category of the "individual" or "individualism" merits the chronic (ideological) use of "abstract" for an adjective, regardless of the context or meaning involved. Especially, in such cases, it doesn't take all that much exploration to discover that the concepts of "society" and the "social" employed tend themselves to become more and more abstract in practice. This is because when the fundamental reality of the concrete living individual is denied (and consistently reduced to an abstraction), in what is there left for society to consist?

The problem is the same for all forms of political ideology. By artificially elevating some level of social organization (most often, the nation-state) to an over-arching reality upon which everything else is subordinated, the existence of the concrete, sovereign individual is progressively denied, reduced to expression through increasingly abstract and one-dimensional roles: citizen, worker, voter, consumer. Only within the anarchist conception of the concrete, free individual interacting with other concrete individuals and groups within an unreified society can the genuine practice of individual and collective freedom be found.

Jason McQuinn, Editor

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"The whirligig of time has its revenges."
—B.A.G. Fuller

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Short news and comment articles or reviews which are used in "Openers," "The Sad Truth," "Alternative Media Review" or "International Anarchist News" may be edited for brevity and style. Other submissions (features) will be significantly edited only with the author's permission. *Anarchy* editors reserve the power to make editorial comments, to run introductions or responses, to classify articles, to respond to letters, and to place sidebars wherever deemed appropriate. Until we can afford to remunerate authors, photographers, and graphic artists for their published contributions we will give free issues &/or subscriptions, or other appropriate tokens of our appreciation.

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Wildcat: Anarchists Against Bombs by Donald Room (Freedom Press, London, England).

Inside Anarchy

As our 24th year of publication begins the *Anarchy* magazine staff is preparing for a major transition over the next twelve months or so. Following the Fall/Winter issue (#58) due out later this year, we will begin planning for a Spring/Summer 2005 25th anniversary issue (#59) to celebrate both 25 years of anarchist culture, communication and resistance, and a renewed commitment to carry on the *Anarchy* magazine project into the coming decades of this still-new century.

Immediately following the 25th anniversary issue *Anarchy* magazine will complete its relocation to the San Francisco Bay Area, a process which has already been set in motion and which will slowly continue until the new San Francisco Bay Area collective puts out its first issue in the fall of 2005. Thus this issue and the next two issues will be transitional in more than one way—from our first 25 years to the next, and from our longstanding base in Columbia, Missouri to a new base in the East Bay. As astute readers will already have noticed, as of the last issue the new collective has already taken over responsibility for subscriptions at the new Bay Area address: C.A.L., POB 3448, Berkeley, CA 94703. And in the current issue readers will note that several members of the Bay Area collective have also begun contributing their writing talents to the magazine.

This new issue of *Anarchy* starts off with an editorial critical of the increasingly obvious “Fear of individual freedom in the radical milieu.” There has long been an open—and often contemptuous—disregard and disapproval of the idea and practice of genuine individual freedom within the broader anticapitalist milieu—especially in its authoritarian—Marxist, nationalist or Jacobin/Leninist—manifestations. However, in recent years, an accompanying undertone of surreptitious opposition to the idea and practice of individual freedom *within the anarchist milieu itself* has increasingly surfaced, most notably within the remaining Bookchinite/social ecology milieu (now possibly in the process of dissociating itself from the anarchist movement, given Bookchin’s recent renunciations of anarchism) and some of the various, confused neo-Platformist positions. It’s time for anarchists to acknowledge that the fear of individual freedom has no welcome place within



the anarchist milieu.

Several of the feature essays in this new issue focus on important aspects of the anarchist critique of identity politics. Aragorn! has attempted to contextualize these essays in a short introduction titled “Anarchist Identity in the 21st Century?” These essays include a description and analysis of last fall’s Anarchist People of Color conference—titled “Was there Anarchy in Detroit?,” Dot Matrix’s critique of Challenging White Supremacy workshops—titled “On the Road with CWS,” and Christina Heatherton’s critique of “Representation as Salvation” in the Poetry for the People movement. Dot Matrix also contributes a critical revision to theories of domestic violence. Jill Haunold (influenced by theorists like Lacan and Foucault) formulates a somewhat different perspective to the traditional anarchist critiques of schooling in “It’s about Time.” Ursula Le Guin contributes a short interview including some of her latest thoughts on gender, anarchy and writing. And, finally, we present in full the latest contributions to the important, ongoing anarchist debate over “Leftism or post-left critique?”

Also well worth noting, this issue includes Michael William’s account of “The Exploited Show Riot” in Montreal, a description of the recent IMC split in the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as the second installment to the new column by Aragorn! on “Strategy & Anarchy” and the first installment of

vita cruciari’s new column, “Tortured Life.”

The selection of C.A.L. Books for sale has moved to page 23, because of lack of room at the end of this issue, mostly due to the length of the leftism/post-left debate, which also, unfortunately, required cutting down the length of the letters column this time around (“Sorry” to those whose letters will now appear in the following issue). The latest additions to the C.A.L. Books list remain John Zerzan’s newest collection, *Running on Emptiness*, and Stuart Christie’s *We, the Anarchists!* Both are very important books, so if you haven’t yet seen them consider ordering your copies today! And we hope to have other new books available very soon. You can check the www.anarchy-mag.org web site for updates when other new books become available, including the long-promised editions of *Withered Anarchism* and *Post-Left Anarchy*. For that matter, much more work is being planned to begin updating the entire *Anarchy* web site this spring and summer. We hope to get much more content from the current and back issues available soon, as well as introducing some additional unpublished (non-magazine) content to the site.

New readers of this magazine, *welcome* to the Spring/Summer issue! We think you’ll find it inspiring. Our aim is to help encourage you to join with all the other like-minded people in this world to transform society and change everyday life!

-Jason McQuinn, Editor

The story of the first Independent Media Center split

While it had been percolating for almost a year, it has been in the past few months that the rumors crystallized and became reality. The San Francisco Independent Media Center has split into two separate organizations. It has become the San Francisco Independent Media Center (SF-IMC) on the one hand and the San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center (Indybay) on the other. This is an important story for a number of reasons. The IMC and the SF-IMC (pre-split) in particular, represent one of the most concrete contributions of the anti-globalization movement in the United States. The local IMC has one of the most specifically anarchist compositions of any IMC in North America. The consequences of the split affect a variety of anarchist, activist, and cultural groups throughout the Bay Area. Finally, there are lessons within this story that both inform us of the problematic of hierarchies-of-skill within anti-hierarchical organizations and speak to the future of how our behavior will be tracked, especially in transparent organizations.

For clarity's sake I am not going to cut-and-paste URL's into this story. They are not particularly easy to transpose from paper to browser and (in my opinion) they do not flow in a very interesting way. I will instead give phrases (framed in quotes) that when typed into Google (a popular search engine on the Internet) will provide the back-story. I also will not cover the more scandalous parts of this story. For as titillating as they are, they obscure the more important parts of the story. Finally I will only cover publicly available information. There is an entire family of conspiracy that is only interesting to the five or six people closest to these series of events.

A quick history of the IMC in general and the SF-IMC (pre-split) is in order (and is lifted from the "Indymedia FAQ"). The first IMC website was launched in November 1999 to coincide with the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. Over the next year the idea of using the Internet as an independent media outlet and calling it IMC became popular. The number of IMCs has since grown to over 100, based all over the world. The SF-IMC (pre-split) was formed in 2000 by independent media activists.

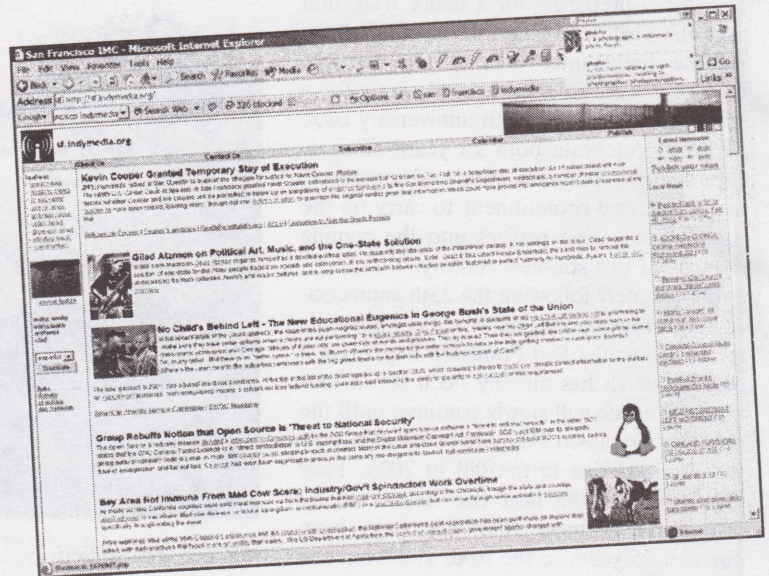
The local IMCs have a large anarchist membership. They have tabled at the local anarchist book fair most years since their inception. They have members that volunteer at the local anarchist bookstore. Their mem-

bership appears to range from anarcho-communists and platformists, to the common anarcho-liberalism of modern activist culture. While there are non-anarchists involved in the project they are not as visible a part of the membership as the anarchists.

The function of the IMC in the Bay Area is worth mentioning. While the Bay Area is a haven for liberal and progressive projects, and there are even some popular websites where announcements for grassroots events can happen, they are apt to get lost in the wash of hipster parties and pocket gurus shilling their wares. The IMC has served a very useful purpose with its 'Open Newswire' where you can post announcements about events, rants about Israel, and missives about how dreamy Kucinich is; all in a truly democratic environment. There are plenty of problems with the Indymedia; many of them addressed quite clearly by Chuck Munson (of *Practical Anarchy* fame) in his article "The Sad Decline of Indymedia". But the short and long of the issue in the Bay Area is that if you want to advertise an event to an audience that will likely attend, you have to post on Indymedia.

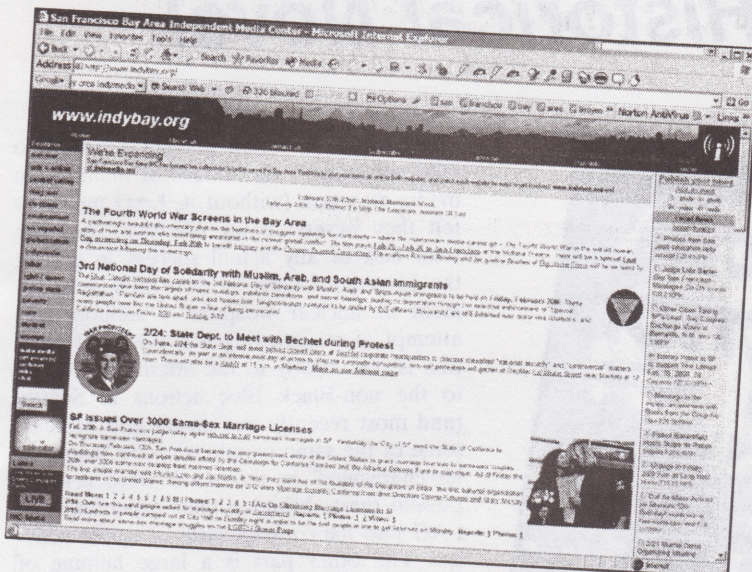
The Split

If you believe what you read in the "Open Letter to the Global Indymedia Network from SF Bay Area IMC" then the split was caused by personal disagreements between members of the technology group and other members of the IMC. The tech workers demanded a split and began to make technical decisions that affected the IMC. The tech workers are particularly powerful in the SF-IMC because they actually write the code 'sf-active' used by more than a dozen IMCs throughout the world. More than this, they actually host (as in own and manage the



servers of) a half a dozen different IMCs. Given that the technology is what makes IMC possible, the delicacy of this situation should be obvious. The breakdown of communication and a corresponding escalation of rhetoric necessitated the hiring of a mediator. The resulting mediation (that involved only a fraction of the IMC) resulted in the expected agreement to exchange property (meaning web domain names, computer equipment, and the shared office), money, and the promise of civil interaction between the two groups into the future. That lasted for less than two months.

After the publication of the "Open Letter," both of the new IMCs became very active in some of the worst behavior imaginable. Imagine the worst things you could say about someone you didn't like very much, and that was what was being said, in public, on the open newswire of the local IMC. At the same time, both groups appeared to be seeking some guidance from the global IMC community through the aptly named "IMC us-process list" to no avail. No one who didn't live in the Bay Area seemed to have much stomach for diving into such a nasty situation. This situation continued for a couple of weeks until the ferocity was noticed by Chris Thompson, a journalist for a local 'independent' paper (actually owned by New Times, a national publisher of 'alternative weeklies') who used the feud as justification for his profession in "Flameout of the Armchair Radicals". This sensationalist coverage



of what could have been seen as an intimate divorce seemed to settle people down as the public fighting has virtually ended.

Conclusions

Splits happen. Most of the time it is for the worst, especially in terms of membership numbers. Many times it is necessary to destroy yourself to save what is worthwhile in your project. Both sides of the local IMC split appear to believe that the split is for the better. It is an open question as to whether the split will benefit the Bay Area radical milieu, as there are as many good arguments for centralization of knowledge as there are for decentralizing power. This particular event is not meaningful as an argument for or against political (or 'personal') splits. It is meaningful as a way to see how knowledge hierarchies affect organizations and what information gathering will look like in the future.

One of the largest points in the "Open Letter" is that the technology group, by happenstance or intention, is in effect holding the Indybay group's very existence in their hands. This is because the SF-IMC group actually owns the URL but points it to the Indybay server. This circumstance has occurred because of a lack of preparation, both technically and organizationally, on Indybay's part and due to stubbornness on SF-IMC's part not to make anything any easier for Indybay. While a lack of preparation and stubbornness are common in a split, they are highlighted by the fact that they were 'caused' by a hierarchy of knowledge (in this case the ability and will to buy a domain name). The primary way that such hierarchies are challenged in the classic anarchist model is to either have such a clear structure that abuse of (in this case)

knowledge does not have an unduly negative affect or to rotate responsibilities so that such hierarchies do not ossify. In the case of a technology-dependent project, such as the IMC, it is easy to see how human problems arise from specialization on the one hand and technicals on the other. You cannot rotate a task when only 10% of your membership under-

stands how to do it and most of the other 90% are never going to learn. Liberal protestations of 'but they could learn' or 'they should make it easier' are going to fall on the deaf ears of an engineer who prefers (and sees) their job as turning the right knobs and making things work on a budget that requires more of their time than anyone else's.

In this conflict there has been a radical overuse of the epithet "COINTELPRO" as a way to dismiss criticism and bargain away the responsibility for bad behavior. It is probable that 'they' are watching the IMC network, but there should be a better assessment on the part of the participants as to what that observation actually looks like. On the one hand, there is absolutely no reason for 'them' to watch IMC. It is a classic 'free speech' kind of a project whose most radical politics come out of anonymous screeds posted to the open newswire. On the other, is the fact that 'they' are watching everything. If they are watching everything, then what form does that observation take? In this age that takes the form of computer observation. Computers are cheap. People are expensive. Creating files, gating comments, and tracking surfing habits are all the work of computers. Assume that all of this is happening. Understanding the local and national consequences of the split in the Bay Area IMC takes human intelligence. While there are assuredly real humans somewhere that do understand the connection, it is a stretch to assume that they are doing much of anything other than pointing their computers at the public information already mentioned, to add to files, to gate comments, and to track users habits. A COINTELPRO type effort by 'them' requires vast resources and the belief that what they are examining is worth destroying. It may be argued that providing a venue for right wing

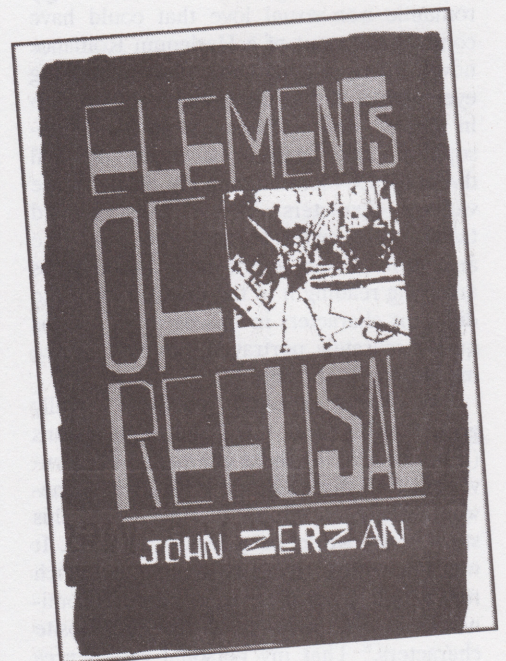
screeds and polemics about zionazis is worth destroying, but for very different reasons than 'they' would use to requisition such an effort.

Which brings us to specifics. If you are a forming an organization that relies on a technical apparatus, talk about the power dynamics of 'the techies' before you get started. Not after. If you are active on several online forums, come up with multiple identities and go out of your way to not connect them online. Never post an email address that can be connected to your real name. Do most of your work off line. Never trust computers.

-Aragorn!

Elements of Refusal

spells it all out. Here it is axiomatic that art, language, time, industrialism, number, technology, work and other aspects of our social lives—all hailed as the liberators of humanity—are, in fact, the co-conspirators of domestication and domination.



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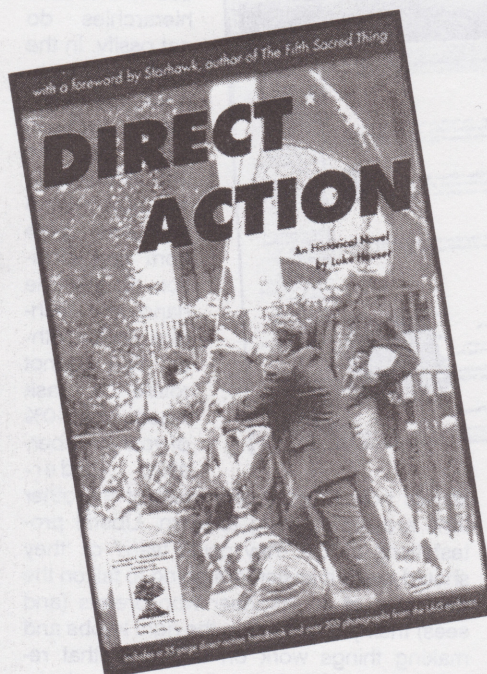
Direct Action; An Historical Novel

Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

Direct Action; An Historical Novel by Luke Hauser (GroundWork, POB 14141, San Francisco, CA 94114, 2003) 767 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Reading historical novels can be pretty interesting, especially if you are familiar with the time during which they take place. Not only am I familiar with the time; I'm also familiar with the places and events that are used as the background for the main story. The title refers to the newsletter of LAG, the Livermore Action Group, which was an anti-nuclear weapons non-violent civil disobedience group active in the San Francisco Bay Area in the mid-1980s. Accompanied by over 300 photos of various parts of political (mostly anti-nuclear weapons) demonstrations, the story centers on the personal experiences and emotional (?) growth of the narrator within that particular activist scene, especially on the production of the newsletter. Issues of non-monogamy figure prominently in the interpersonal narrative (including one scene of sickeningly romantic non-sexual love that could have come straight out of a Harlequin Romance novel: deep, longing stares into unblinking eyes with a verbal declaration of pure—as in chaste—desire. Yuck.), while the philosophical and tactical exigencies of civil disobedience loom large in the dialog of the various characters. The debates around tactics were awful to hear the first time around in person, and it didn't become less annoying reading it in the discussions of the different characters in this narrative; it was quite accurately portrayed, however, giving me chilling flashbacks.

The overall exposition provides a really good feel for those times and those actions (if not necessarily those emotions—the non-violent civil disobedience milieu was somewhat outside my circle). In other words, this story really works as a historical novel. It was interesting trying to figure out which real people from those days figured prominently in the creation of the “composite characters.” That my personal experiences dovetail with several actions (I was on some of the War Chest Tours, and I was arrested at the last big demo where the narrator was also busted—plus I'm identifiable in at least two of the photos) certainly helped keep me interested in getting to the end of this hefty book. Perhaps one of the best parts of the book (aside from portraying some of the more human aspects of activism, like going



to actions due to feeling guilty for not wanting to go—a kind of obligatory solidarity, which to me defeats the whole idea of solidarity) was the long description of being locked up in a temporary jail (under circus tents) after an action with a mass arrest. The endless tedium of being there for a week—despite being among political allies—really comes through the text. That is effectively contrasted with the several days the author had to endure in regular jail as part of his sentence for the same action, days of almost unbearable tension punctuated with moments of support from fellow inmates (the author is surprised to learn that some regular criminals expressed respect for the goals of the LAG demonstrators—a pretty typical reaction from self-referential do-gooders).

What is curious is that the last 70 pages or so contain information about LAG, its philosophy, its structure, and its direct action handbook. Information for bulk ordering, and obtaining study and action guides is also provided. It seems somewhat odd that this material is included without comment, as if it were intended to be used by other activist groups today—regardless of the fact that LAG effectively ceased to exist (going out with a whimper, not a bang) almost twenty years ago. The end of the organization was in part due to the seriously strained, often opposing tactical imperatives

of its members (from pro-jail pacifism to mild vandalism), the nature of mainstream media attention (without it, LAG members felt they weren't being effective), and the total lack of any actual success in getting the Livermore Labs to stop their development of nuclear weapons. I suppose this attempt at resurrecting a LAG-like formation is due mostly to the attention brought to the non-Black Bloc actions in Seattle (and most recently in Cancun and Miami); some of the same people who are “composite characters” in the novel were actually present there, bringing their experiences of LAG into the consciousness of newer activists. The other part is a large helping of some wishful thinking. In any case, the idea that the same structures and tactics that were a failure twenty years ago might be more effective and useful contemporarily is a stretch at best.

But the book is a good read, if painful at times. It would be interesting to get the reactions of people who weren't around in those days, who weren't privy to the ridiculous arguments about whether or not to go to jail for sitting in the middle of a road, and who have no experience in producing a newsletter without using computers.

One last warning: Hauser's presence at Starhawk's Reclaiming Network Spiral Dance in the epilogue feels somewhat extraneous; throughout the course of the narrative, he has maintained an agnostic skepticism toward such things, but his motivation for attending is the return to town of a former lover who is going. Given that, the narrator's sudden Paul-like “conversion” to neo-paganism is completely unbelievable.

Other books received:

No Masters! No Gods! Dare to Dream by Norman Nawrocki (Smarten Up! & Get to the Point, 304-1320 Salsbury Dr., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 4B3, Canada; 1999) 48pp. \$10.00 pamphlet. Subversive poetry.

Wildcat: Anarchists Against Bombs by Donald Rooum (Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England, 2003) 48pp. £3.00 paper. Anarchist comics about the arms trade.

Libres y Salvajes: la diversidad insurreccional by Llabor d'Anarquia, Robin Terranova, John Moore, Killing King Abacus. (Llabor d'Anarquia, c/Mestres Casals i Martorell 18, 08003 Barcelona, Spain) 32 pp. pamphlet, no price listed.

Complete Cinematic Works of Debord

Reviewed by L.D. Hobson

Complete Cinematic Works by Guy Debord, translated & edited by Ken Knabb (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St, Oakland, CA 94612-1163, USA; AK Press, POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland; 2003) 264 pp. \$29.00 hardcover.

Hats off to Ken Knabb for his heroic effort to re-create the films of Guy Debord on paper, and in English. Knabb's format flows and is (mostly) pleasantly clear.

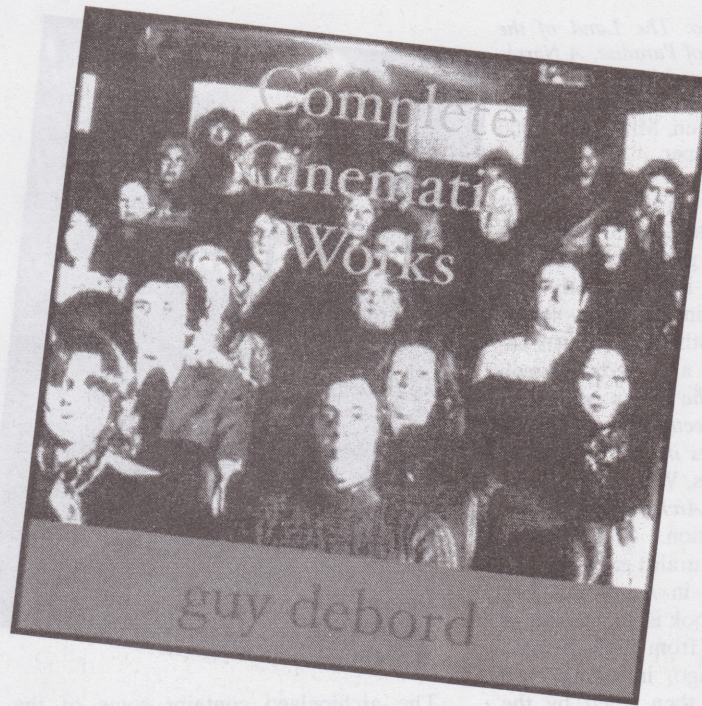
Debord is known for his involvement in the Situationist International, his books (most notably *Society of the Spectacle*) and his avant-garde films. In all of these he endeavored to describe and critique all types of capitalism and to develop radical/agitating tactics to challenge said systems.

Knabb's book contains the scripts for Debord's films alongside detailed descriptions of scenes (or descriptions of image-free moments), followed by select frames from each of the films. The book includes treatments of "Howls for Sade," "On the Passage of a Few Persons Through a Rather Brief Unity of Time," "Critique of Separation," "The Society of the Spectacle," "Refutation of All the Judgments, Pro or Con, thus Far Rendered on the Film 'The Society of the Spectacle'" and "In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni."

Knabb also compiles several tantalizing tidbits after the scripts. Specifically, he includes some well-chosen documents about the films, situationist theories and the context of the times. All are worth a thorough reading.

The notes section is quite impressive, offering details for each of the *détourned* pieces, and other interesting facts about the history or context of each of the scenes. It's a little rough having to flip back and forth, but overall a good decision to separate out the minutia in favor of making the scripts clear and quick to read. For those of you who love details, or are thrilled by situationist ideas, it's worth the work.

Knabb then offers a bare sketch of Debord's life. I would have liked this to include more details, especially for Debord's first 20 years. (For such an influential person, a page and three-quarters of mostly one-liners hardly seems fair.) The Filmography is interesting mostly for the "Unrealized Film Projects" section. The bibliography (including both French and English texts) is



reasonably sized, well categorized and contains short reviews of each of the titles, very helpful.

From the evocative cover to the index my complaints are few for this book, however, I feel compelled to suggest that Debord may not have been as happy as I am with the transformation of his work. I'm certainly not implying Ken did a poor job translating, (though I personally have no way of checking, I'm sure he did a fine job) but it is clear Debord strove for a bit of confusion, frustration and/or under/overwhelm. Knabb's concise translations and clear format greatly increase the accessibility and coherence of the contents of the films. Add to this the loss of sensations like sight, sound, and the possibility of a real "situation" in the *24 minutes* of silence and black screen ("Howls for Sade") and Debord might actually be horrified with the result. Debord, following Brecht's lead, desired to provoke spectators into thinking/acting for themselves rather than providing them with an escape. I'm not sure the book is true to Debord's desire for riotous reactions.

But for this myopic, velocity-challenged thinker getting the opportunity to read the scripts at my own pace was an immensely gratifying and elucidating experience. Again, probably not the feelings Debord was striving to create.... But don't worry about it too

much, Ken, I'm sure Debord would be even less thrilled with my reviewing your reworking of his work. Would that make this review a third degree spectacle?? (see page 216)

In short, this book is definitely recommended for anyone who is deeply interested in Debord and/or the situationists. A word of caution, however: the films may lose a little of their bite if you already know how they end. Read at your own risk.

Extreme Islam

Extreme Islam; Anti-American propaganda of Muslim Fundamentalism edited by Adam Parfrey (Feral House, Los Angeles, 2001) 318 pages \$16.00 paper.

Just about any book coming from Feral House will annoy somebody somewhere; Parfrey must be doing something right. This anthology of primary documents, most of them coming from English-language sources, is sure to embarrass "progressive" Muslims (the same way that Pat Robertson embarrasses "progressive" Christians). The fact is that extremist fanaticism (fundamentalism is not the best word to use since historically it refers to a particular segment of American Protestants) is not the exclusive domain of Islam or Christianity. Parfrey has included a couple of examples of both Christian and Jewish fanaticism in this anthology, just to balance things out a bit; and those selections are fully relevant since they deal with the various plans to destroy/supplant the al-Aqsa mosque and replace it with the Jewish Third Temple. The most important part is the anti-Western discussions of course, and there are great

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The Malay Archipelago

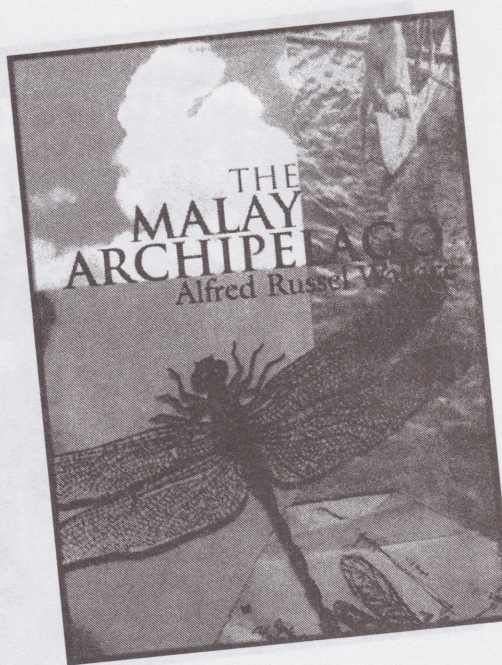
Reviewed by Alex Trotter

The Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-utan and the Bird of Paradise, A Narrative of Travel with Studies of Man and Nature by Alfred Russel Wallace (Charles E. Tuttle Co, 153 Milk Street, Boston, MA 02109, 2000 [1869]) 518 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Alfred Russel Wallace, one of the nineteenth century's grand old men of science, discovered, independently of Charles Darwin, the principle of evolution by natural selection, although Darwin received the greater fame and credit through his magnum opus, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859). Nevertheless, Wallace graciously dedicated *The Malay Archipelago* to Darwin "with deep admiration." Like Darwin, Wallace was a great naturalist-explorer and had previously traveled in Amazonia with Henry W. Bates. This book is an account of his eight years of travel, from 1854 to 1862, in the Malay archipelago, including New Guinea, through lands then ruled by the Dutch, British, and Portuguese empires and now comprising the present states of Malaysia and Indonesia. As Wallace points out, this is an immense area, as large as the whole of Europe.

The Malay Archipelago was very popular, going through fifteen editions in Wallace's lifetime, and inspiring not only other collectors and explorers, but also writers such as Joseph Conrad, who also had been to that region of the world in his travels (Wallace's Malay travelogue was supposed to have been Conrad's favorite book).

Wallace was a pioneer in zoogeography, the study of the origins of the geographical distribution of animal species and their relationship to climatic habitats. His greatest discovery arising from the Malay journeys was the existence of an invisible geographical boundary running through the Makassar Strait between Borneo and Sulawesi (Celebes), and between Bali and Lombok, marking an abrupt divide between "Indo-Malayan" and "Austro-Malayan" species. The fauna to the west of this line are characteristic of the Asian mainland to which these islands were once attached; those to the east and south of it are home to species like those of Australia, including many marsupial mammals. This divide, known as "Wallace's Line," is still upheld, with some modifications, by natural scientists.



The archipelago contains some of the greatest human cultural diversity as well as biodiversity in the world. For example, about one quarter of all living languages are spoken on the island of New Guinea. Wallace's book includes as an appendix a comparative table of words from fifty-nine different languages. He was himself a good speaker of Malay.

The Malay Archipelago is a classic in the literature of natural history and an engaging true-life adventure story propelled by Wallace's able skill as a writer. But it is also a document indelibly marked by the social reality of its time, and there is a fair amount of unpleasantness in it. Wallace was certain that he was the first Englishman to set foot in those regions of Borneo and New Guinea where he ventured, and there is little doubt he was right. The forest primeval into which he plunged, filled with wonder, was an Eden receding already at the point of encounter. Here he collected thousands of specimens, mostly insects and birds. The live birds of paradise that he sent back to England helped fuel a boom in fashion plumage that seriously depleted many bird species and continued up till World War I. He also gives distasteful accounts of his shooting of orangutans that the British Museum might be supplied with specimens.

Many of his observations concerning nature and human society contain curious

inconsistencies. On one hand, he demonstrates a certain sympathy for the primitive peoples he comes in contact with, going so far as to compare British civilization, with its urban crowding and squalor, crime, and social inequality, unfavorably with the egalitarian life of the "savages." On the other hand, he comes out as a stalwart upholder of colonialism who believes that "the Dutch system is the very best that can be adopted, when a European nation conquers or otherwise acquires possession of a country inhabited by an industrious but semi-barbarous people." The system he refers to is the Cultivation System (*cultuurstelsel*), through which the Dutch compelled the production of export crops at the expense of subsistence farming. The industrialization of the Netherlands was subsidized by this form of tribute extracted from Javanese peasants. Max Havelaar, a contemporary anticolonial novel describing the corruption of the Dutch East India Company's coffee empire in Java, was pooh-poohed by Wallace, to whom it seemed that the natives were content under Dutch rule. Elsewhere Wallace says that the Portuguese and Spaniards were "truly wonderful conquerors and colonizers ...resembling the Romans in their power of impressing their own language, religion, and manners on rude and barbarous tribes."

Wallace classified the Malay, Polynesian, and Papuan/Melanesian tribes according to a typology of human "races" along a geographical divide nearly identical to the zoological one he described. He found qualities to admire in these peoples, but he was also full of condescending judgments. The Malays, he felt, were more important because more civilized, and thus deserved a place in history. Nevertheless, he found their intellect deficient and their civilization entirely derivative of Islam or Hinduism (here quaintly described as the "Mahometan or Brahminical religions"). The Papuans, for their part, possessed a superior artistic and intellectual potential but were lacking in affections and moral sentiments.

Despite these examples of cultural chauvinism and pro-colonial apologetics, Wallace was, by the standards of his time, far from being the worst kind of jingoistic racist; his statements concerning subject peoples were in line with the mainstream of Liberal opinion in Victorian Britain. After he returned to England from his tropical expeditions, he turned increasingly to spiritualism and radicalism, becoming what Marx would



have called a "bourgeois socialist." An opponent of Irish landlordism, Wallace worked with John Stuart Mill on land tenure reform and later formed his own Land Nationalization Society. He was also a supporter of Henry George's "single tax." His ideas on social reform, like those of Robert Owen, whom Wallace always admired, were paternalistic, though, and stopped short of supporting the self-emancipation of either the metropolitan working classes or the colonial peasantry.

The phrase "survival of the fittest" was coined by Herbert Spencer, who used it to build on Malthus's dictum that poverty and fighting over dwindling resources are inevitable because population growth will always outpace the food supply. Wallace suggested to Darwin that he use this phrase for the purpose of popularizing the idea of natural selection, although he was wary of the might-makes-right notions that came to be associated with it in the perverse and protofascist creed of "social Darwinism" promoted by Spencer and T. H. Huxley, among others. Social Darwinism appeared to be a fitting ideological complement to an expanding overseas empire and laissez-faire capitalist economy. It became almost a religion in some quarters of the British establishment, supplanting a desiccated Anglican Christianity. Darwin stood in relation to his epigones much as Marx did to his—not personally responsible for their crudest excesses, but the weaknesses and blind spots in this thinking invited distortion

and degeneration. Wallace was somewhat less culpable in the formation of social Darwinist ideology. He never gave up trying to reconcile natural selection with his social reformism, despite the early influence of Malthus on both him and Darwin. While these two Englishmen were formulating their theories based on their journeys to the tropics, the Russian anarchist prince Petr Kropotkin was arriving at a different conception of natural selection based on his own scientific studies in Siberia. For him, sociality and cooperation within animal species rather than violent competition were the principal guarantors of success in survival strategies. The Darwin-Wallace model of evolution needs to be assessed critically alongside Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902).

Wallace, perhaps remembering the fate of the native people of Tasmania, believed that the Papuans would become "extinct" if the onslaught of European colonization continued into New Guinea: "A warlike and energetic people, who will not submit to national slavery or to domestic servitude, must disappear before the white man as surely as do the wolf and the tiger." Today, it is the civilization of multinational capital, not always administered by "the white man," that poses a grave threat to the Papuans. The eastern half of the island of New Guinea was divided up between Britain and Germany; the latter lost its colonial empire in World War I, whereupon Australia became the new, League of Nations-

mandated master. Papua New Guinea has been a nominally independent state since 1975 but is still virtually an Australian protectorate. The Dutch had claimed the western half of the island, but never did anything with it. After Japan's failed bid to replace the Western empires in Southeast Asia with its own in World War II, the era of old-fashioned colonialism started to crumble in a tide of revolutionary nationalism. Eventually, in 1963 Indonesia took over western New Guinea, naming it Irian Jaya, and instituted a brutal campaign to destroy the Papuans' traditional life and put them to work, as well as encourage Malay colonial settlement. An indigenous resistance movement of the Melanesians, known as the Free Papua Movement (TPN/OPM) has been fighting against Indonesian rule. The West Papuans were spared the full brunt of the civilizing mission of Christianity and Western imperialism, but now face the petty yet bloodthirsty imperialism of Indonesia, which has also been felt by the Timorese.

Indonesia has the world's highest number of endangered and threatened species of birds and mammals, including the rhinoceroses and tigers of Sumatra. The orangutans of Borneo had a plentiful population when Wallace explored the island, but have dwindled down to only a few thousand individuals. As a result of rapacious destruction of Indonesian rain forests by multinational timber corporations such as Mitsubishi and Georgia Pacific, massive forest fires, histori-

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Late Victorian Holocausts

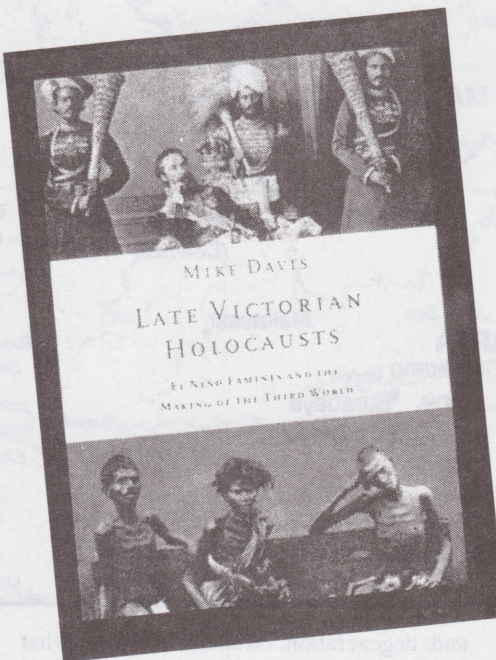
Reviewed by Alex Trotter

Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World by Mike Davis (Verso, New York, 2001) 464 pp., \$27.00 hardcover/\$20.00 paper.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century a series of devastating droughts and famines occurred in the monsoon tropics and northern China. The extreme climatic conditions that brought about these famines were associated with weather patterns known as El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO). The worst of these events happened in India, China, and Brazil. The loss of life was staggering, between 30 million and 60 million victims of starvation and epidemics in three separate but related global famines in 1877-1878, 1888-1891, and 1896-1902. Not since the Black Death of 500 years earlier had there been a disaster of such magnitude. The mortality rates in some countries were as great as if a nuclear holocaust had occurred. In telling the story of these forgotten disasters, Mike Davis shows that it wasn't bad weather alone that killed so many people, and details how the relationship between global climate changes associated with El Niño and imperialist policies pursued by European capitalist regimes resulted in a dramatic division of humanity into have and have-not regions of the world.

Davis, who calls himself a "Marxist-Environmentalist," sets out in this work to analyze the convergence of failed economic and political systems with "ecological poverty," defined as the loss or depletion of the natural resource base of traditional agriculture. In precolonial times, the peasants in India and China had been protected from famine-associated subsistence crises by a kind of bureaucratic or despotic welfare system practiced by the Mogul and Qing states, which maintained irrigation systems and stockpiled and distributed food in times of hardship caused by natural disasters. As the traditional social and economic systems were undermined by the global laissez-faire economy centered in London, the peasants were left in the lurch when epochal drought conditions and crop failures struck, and they perished in the millions. The British authorities were extremely parsimonious in their aid, which came with absurd conditions when it came at all.

In 120 years of British rule, there were four times as many famines as there had



been in the previous millennium. The Radical journalist William Digby, describing the 1876 Madras famine, said, "When the part played by the British Empire in the 19th century is regarded by the historian 50 years hence, the unnecessary deaths of millions of Indians would be its principal and most notorious monument." But who remembers it now? Lords Lytton, Elgin II, and Curzon, the British viceroys of India during this period, presided over an empire of suffering. Starving Indians begged the police to arrest them, because at least in jail they would have something to eat. Stockpiles of food existed, as did transportation networks to deliver it, but people could not afford to buy it. In an echo of the Irish famine, grain was exported from India to Britain while people starved. British relief measures required applicants to travel to dormitory camps and perform hard labor to "earn" their rations. Desperation even led some people to cannibalism. Lytton, whom Davis calls "India's Nero," lavished money on Queen Victoria's investiture as Empress of India and on military skirmishes with the Russians on the Afghan frontier in preference to relief efforts for the famine victims.

In China there was drought followed by floods of the Yellow River during a time when the country was being overrun by foreign armies, Christian proselytizers, and cheap goods imported from British India that wrecked local handicrafts. The weak-

ened Qing dynasty could no longer effectively fulfill its "mandate of heaven" to control the floods through hydraulic engineering and provide food relief. As in India, millions fell and horrors abounded: living skeletons fought over the flesh of their dead neighbors, children were sold for food, and sick or dying people were often attacked and devoured by wild animals. Disease epidemics finished off those weakened by starvation.

In the Sertão region in the north of Brazil, Britain had no direct political or military control, but the power of London banks still called the shots. The Conservative sugar planter-aristocracy of Brazil, where slavery was abolished only in 1888, followed the reactionary Roman Catholic church hierarchy, while the Liberal bourgeoisie was deeply influenced by British utilitarianism and social Darwinism. The Brazilian elites followed the British example from India of giving relief to afflicted peasants only in exchange for labor. When starving *sertanejos* made an exodus out of drought-stricken areas, looting on the way, they were forcibly deported into the Amazonian interior. Racism also played a role in public policy; the elites concentrated on developing the southern part of Brazil and encouraging immigration from European countries into that region while neglecting the north, where most of the population was black.

Imperialists took advantage of the weakened condition of stricken countries to aggrandize their conquests and spheres of influence against impoverished people who proved no match for Maxim guns. Famine and drought proved a great help in the carve-up of Africa by European powers, and also became the allies of the U.S. military against Filipino rebels, of the Japanese in Korea, and of the French in New Caledonia, whose brutal pacification was witnessed by the exiled Communeur Louise Michel.

The economic mechanisms of the New Imperialism included the Gold Standard, initiated by Britain and joined by most industrialized countries after 1871. The colonial and semicolonial countries still based their currencies on silver, so when demonetized silver flooded the world market, the currencies of India and China were seriously depreciated, adding to the distress of these countries. The native industries of India were beaten into submission



by outrageously one-way tariffs that guaranteed the ascendancy of British manufactures. Domination of one country aided the domination of the other: the drug pushers of the East India Company forcibly introduced opium from India into China to create a demand that would yield lucrative taxes on its export, then used the proceeds to finance military campaigns on the Indian subcontinent. Forces from the Indian army organized and officered by the British were then sent on campaigns to participate in the wars waged to subjugate other countries, including China, Sudan, Egypt, and Afghanistan.

Starving peasants were not simply victims, but rose up in revolt in numerous countries. These revolts were often led by charismatic religious figures and took on a millenarian aspect. In the turmoil that came on the heels of the Opium Wars, China experienced the greatest number of such popular revolts, including the Taiping, Nian, and Muslim rebellions. The Taiping was the most significant, turning into a massive civil war that left additional millions dead. The Boxer uprising at the end of the nineteenth century targeted foreigners such as Christian missionaries. The Qing dynasty was saved at this time only by military intervention by the Great Powers. In the Sudan the British were challenged by the followers of the Mahdist jihad. And in Brazil's Nordeste the impoverished *sertanejos* gathered around a popular priest and built a "new Jerusalem" in a remote part of the countryside

called Canudos, which initially repulsed attacks of the Brazilian army, but eventually it was razed and its defenders slaughtered.

Historically, the forms of social inequality had tended to be more "vertical" than "horizontal": at the time of the French Revolution, the gap in material conditions of life among the different social classes within European societies was by far greater than the overall differences in wealth of European countries as compared with civilizations in other regions of the world. After 1850, however, there was a swift and dramatic decline in the fortunes of the non-Western world as power shifted decisively to western Europe and its settler offshoots. By the end of the nineteenth century, the "prisoners of starvation" referred to in the "Internationale" tended overwhelmingly to be the peasants in the colonial world who were being violently integrated into the new global economy.

Late Victorian Holocausts is in many ways impressive; Davis's work is about as good as leftist scholarship gets. Nevertheless there are bones to pick in it, having to do with its very leftism. My major problem is with this term "third world," a concept with a baleful pedigree, but Davis puts it even into the subtitle of his book, so apparently he feels that it has some useful validity. This term is pregnant with obfuscations, however, that serve Davis ill in using it. He seems vaguely aware of this, because even he places the term in quotation marks most of the time; he settles on it as a kind of shorthand to

describe the inequality of wealth and incomes, or "development gap," among nations that were shaped most decisively in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In this schema there is a "first world," or Western bloc, of developed capitalist states, initially consisting of western Europe, North America, and Japan, supplemented later by "Pacific Rim" outposts; a "second world" consisting of a partially industrialized bloc of Socialist states; and the rest of the world being "third," mired in barely decolonized and scarcely industrialized poverty, and whose loyalties are fought over by the first two. This term has been seen with much less frequency in the last decade or so, since the collapse of the Soviet Union. If there's no longer a "second world," then this tripartite descriptive scheme naturally falls apart.

The history of the "third world" concept warrants a closer look. As a specific term it was invented in 1952 by a French sociologist named Alfred Sauvy, by analogy with the third estate (*i.e.*, the commoners in France in the French Revolutionary period and before), and this term, *tiers monde*, had become common in the French media by the late 1950s. The areas of the world described by this term were generally meant to include most of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, containing in the aggregate more than 70 percent of the world's population and, following decolonization, a quantitative preponderance at the United Nations. The real emergence of third worldism as an ideology, or constellation of



ideologies, took place at the Bandung Conference held in Indonesia in 1955, animated principally by China and India and seeking to unify all the “developing” nations of the world who declared themselves to be non-aligned in the “superpower” confrontation of the Cold War. This neutralism turned out to be a chimera, however, as the “nonaligned” nations could not avoid being drawn into the orbit of one power bloc or the other.

Before Bandung, the third world as an ideological prototype can be traced to National Bolshevism and Strasserite fascism in Germany (*i.e.*, the anti-imperialist “proletarian nation” thesis) as well as the 1920 Baku “Peoples of the East” congress convened by the Bolsheviks in Soviet Azerbaijan with delegates from nations oppressed under the tsarist empire, which proposed that the colonized nations everywhere should follow the Bolshevik example. After the colonial empires became unhinged by World War II, this is what many countries did, although the model they followed was a further degeneration even from Bolshevism. As the Third International decom-

posed, through Stalinism and into Stalino-nationalism, the People’s Republic of China under Mao became the father-image of revolution in the poorest countries. Third worldism came into full flower through the dissolution of the monolithic facade of Marxism-Leninism upon China’s break with a Soviet Union that no longer had any use for Stalin. A few years after that, Cuba appeared to provide another alternative model. In India, where the first nationalist groups in the nineteenth century had looked to the Irish Home Rule movement as their example, the Soviet-style development model was fused with parliamentary democracy inherited from the British.

Third worldism generated numerous rival variants of national socialism (in the generic sense of that term), the basic common element being the worship of economic development, most often administered by a police state, as the cure for everything. Hypothetical unity among the *tiers monde* nations was belied by the war fought by India and China along their Himalayan border in 1962. Identity politics pivoting around race, religion, and nationalism can

be said to have had its origins at Bandung, with the various pan-ethnic movements, such as pan-Arabism and pan-Africanism, that it embraced.

China’s abandonment of Maoism and the collapse of the Soviet bloc threw the ideology of third worldism into deep crisis as its link with Marxism withered, but it hasn’t disappeared; the World Social Forum of today calls for a vague “Asia-Africa solidarity” and invokes the principles enunciated at the original Bandung conference. An alternate term often encountered is the “Global South,” which has been in use since the 1970s and is a favorite of U.N. bureaucrats. In the world of academe its complement is “postcolonial identity” studies.

Those who view the predicament of the poor countries as a development gap tend to be committed to an idea of progress that implicitly sees the entire world eventually industrializing up to “first world” or “G-7” levels. Russia got shoehorned into the exclusive club of wealthiest and most politically powerful countries to make it a G-8, and it’s conceivable that within a few years China will make it a G-9. The Situationists, in their critique of Marxist third worldism, described this as “catching up to capitalist reification.” Even if this could be universally done it would be utterly unsustainable environmentally.

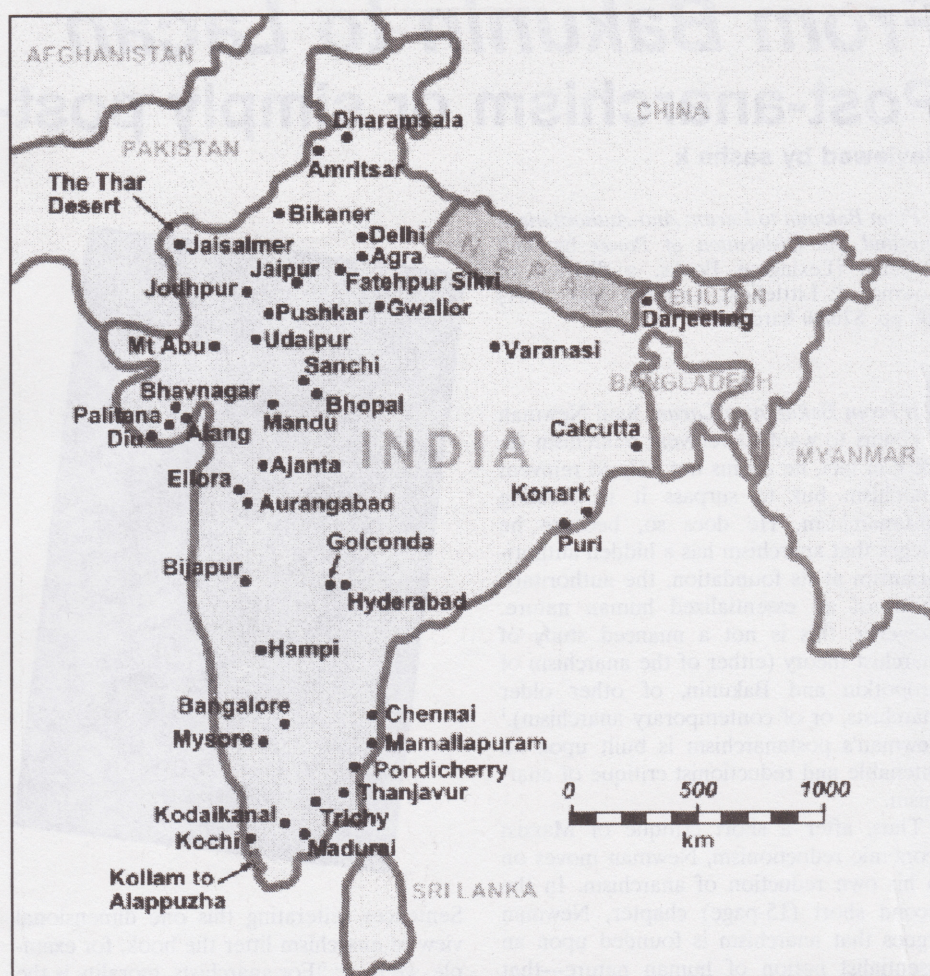
Davis points out how the industrial supremacy of Europe was accomplished in part through the deindustrialization of Asia and tribute extracted from colonies (and before that through the African slave trade and New World plantations). The paradigmatic case was that of India, which had early manufactures such as textiles that rivaled those of England at the outset of the Industrial Revolution. British economic weapons such as tariffs then destroyed the competition and placed India in a dependent position. Part of the apology for the British Raj was that it was bringing modern medicine, a free press, and technology such as railroads and telegraphy to a land stagnating in Oriental despotism. This view was initially shared by Marx, who saw a progressive role for the British Empire in India and even looked forward to that country’s complete Westernization. After the great mutiny of the sepoys in 1857, however, his views on India started to evolve in a direction more critical of imperialism. It became clearer that it was British despotism, built on top of native despotism and making use of it, that was holding India down in every way and causing much destruction but little regeneration.

Yet the idea of Oriental despotism, which Davis mentions in passing dismissively, and the “Asiatic mode of production” associated

with it, might offer a better way of studying the problem of imperialism and “underdevelopment.” The industries of Asian countries such as India had a handicraft basis and were rooted in the ancient village-community. But there was no capitalism (i.e., the reign of autonomous exchange value) in Asia per se and no city-state bourgeoisie arising out of a feudal society as had occurred in western Europe. Marx initially thought that the dissolution of the “patriarchal” rural village-community, which was the foundation of the despotic regime (Indian caste system, Chinese emperors, Russian tsars) by capitalism could not arise from within such a society and would have to be instigated from outside by the imperialist intervention of a more “advanced” foreign power. Eventually, through exposure to the Russian populist movement, he abandoned this notion and decided there was a possibility to avoid the necessity of a capitalist stage of development; the peasant-artisan community could move directly from being the foundation of Oriental despotism to being the foundation of a communist society—with the important condition that it could only succeed with support from the insurgent working classes in the Western countries.

It's possible, of course, that Marx was wrong about this too. One of the main questions in history is what accounted for the rise of the West. One explanation points to favorable geographic and climatic conditions (see, for example, Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel*). There were other civilizations of the Old World including China, India, and the Islamic realm that had some proto-capitalist features (e.g., extensive trading networks by land and sea). Given the anomalous example of Japan's swift accession to capitalist modernity following the Meiji Restoration, it is perhaps not impossible that a true capitalism could have developed somewhere in Asia before it did in Europe; in that case it would still have expanded globally through imperialism, only it would be an Indian- or Chinese-centered rather than a European-centered empire. Today capital has no more need for revolutions; the cycle of revolutions is finished, and, as Camatte says, there is a convergence of capitalism and the Asiatic form. All candidates are now Manchurian. Instead of Oriental despotism, however, it is the despotism of capital.

Davis acknowledges that the term “third world” is of Cold War vintage. Its use therefore inevitably summons a range of themes associated with the Cold War that Davis doesn't often spell out explicitly, although these themes lurk in the background. For example, because of the emphasis given



them by the Cold War, the multimillion-mortality famines in Soviet Ukraine under Stalin and in China during Mao's “Great Leap Forward” are relatively well known by many people in the West who know nothing at all about the millions of victims of British and other Western great-power imperialism in the course of all the late (and early) Victorian holocausts. Davis has set out to redress this lacuna by writing a “Black Book” of Western capitalism, and he does a good job of it. He does actually discuss the Chinese famine of 1958-1961 under Communist rule, which according to him also had an El Niño origin exacerbated by political determinants.

Davis unfortunately defers to Indian nationalist and Chinese Communist interpretations at several points. He refers to the Chinese Revolution as the “Liberation” and praises the PRC regime, even under Mao, for its “impressive commitments to food security and disaster mitigation.” Here Davis's leftism shows; he's too deferential to a regime well known for its authoritarianism and brutality, even if he does criticize its “absence of socialist democracy.” The indisparability of the bureaucracy is taken for

granted, but it is not understood for what it really is—the expression of a state-capitalist French Revolution of the East.

Imperialism is not the only enemy we face, any more than fascism is. These evils won't disappear except through the overcoming of the totality of modern civilization of which they form particularly gangrenous aspects. If the modern Leviathan remains imperialist, it's no longer Victoria's or the Kaiser's imperialism as critiqued by Lenin and Luxemburg. Similarly, if it continues to generate strains of fascism, they no longer sport brown shirts and swastikas. Anti-imperialism, like anti-fascism, as a one-dimensional crusade only gets trapped in a feedback loop that reinforces the whole system: Lord Lytton's Raj or the Khmer Rouge—pick your poison. Overdevelopment of the West is as much a problem as underdevelopment of the rest. Davis presents a powerful historical analysis and indictment of the imperialist crimes that built the wealth and the poverty of the modern world, but his uncritical employment of the concept of “third world” helps to give bureaucratic national liberationism a new lease on its sorry career.

From Bakunin to Lacan

Post-anarchism or simply post-revolution?

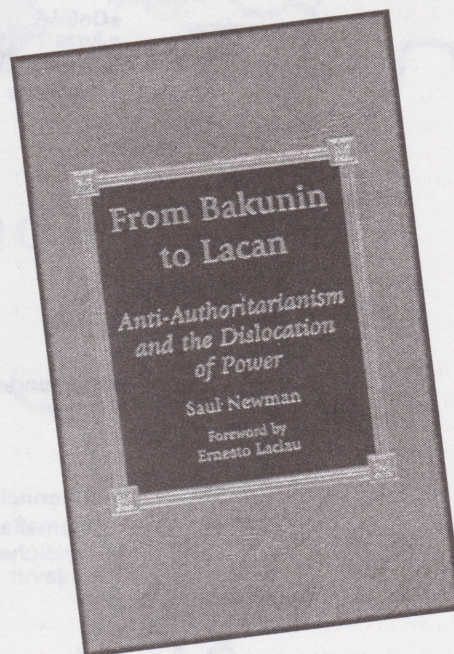
Reviewed by sasha k

From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power by Saul Newman (Lexington Books, a division of Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2001) 208 pp. \$70.00 hardcover.

In *From Bakunin to Lacan*, Saul Newman claims to want to reinvent anarchism (p. 130); in fact, he claims not only to reinvent anarchism but to surpass it in creating postanarchism. He does so, because he alleges that anarchism has a hidden authoritarianism at its foundation, the authoritarianism of an essentialized human nature. However, this is not a nuanced study of anarchist theory (either of the anarchism of Kropotkin and Bakunin, of other older anarchists, or of contemporary anarchism).¹ Newman's postanarchism is built upon an untenable and reductionist critique of anarchism.

Thus, after a short critique of Marxist economic reductionism, Newman moves on to his own reduction of anarchism. In the second short (15-page) chapter, Newman argues that anarchism is founded upon an essentialist notion of human nature—that the human is, by nature, good and pure of power. This essential human nature is then used as a basis from which to critique and resist power. “Anarchism relies on essence: on the notion of an essential, natural human subjectivity; on there being a natural essence in social relations that will be able to take the place of the state, the place of power. This idea of essence constitutes anarchism’s point of departure, its place of resistance which is uncontaminated by power.” (p. 51) Newman quite rightly critiques this Manichean view of the world. To essentialize human nature in such a fashion would limit the possible ways humans could live and relate; something, one would think, anarchists would be against. Yet, we should ask, is this view really that of anarchism?

Newman uses Kropotkin and Bakunin as his stand-ins for anarchism in general, and, in turn, only a few quotes from each to make his case. After giving anarchism such a cursory treatment, Newman’s only mention of anarchism for the rest of the book comes in the form of the repetition *ad infinitum* of the assertion that anarchism relies upon an essentialized human nature.



Sentences reiterating this one dimensional view of anarchism litter the book; for example, we hear: “For anarchists, morality is the essence of man” (p. 40); “Anarchism can reject the state because it argues from the perspective of an essential place—natural human society—and the morality and rationality immanent within it” (p. 46); “For anarchists, human essence is the point of departure from which state power will be overthrown” (p. 62); anarchism is “based on the liberation of one’s essence” (p. 91); and, anarchism is a “moral philosophy...grounded upon the firm foundations of human essence” (p. 127). The assertion goes on and on as if by repetition the argument will become more convincing. Newman constructs this essentialist “anarchism” as a straw man in order to knock it down and to put his postanarchism in its place.

As I argue in this review, Newman’s critique simplifies both Kropotkin and Bakunin as well as contemporary anarchism: anarchism does not “rely” on an essentialized, singular notion of human nature. Newman takes Kropotkin and Bakunin completely out of their historical context, portraying their arguments on human nature as if they were made in an ahistorical vacuum, and then compared to a post-structuralism that came about a century

later. Of course, in comparison to the post-structuralists, whose critique is centered on essentialism, Kropotkin and Bakunin’s critiques of essentialism might seem weak; no great surprise there.

Yet, by viewing Kropotkin’s arguments about mutual aid in context we could note that he was arguing against the common philosophical view of the time, which saw human nature as essentially bad. In other words, if we view Kropotkin within his context we could see his whole discussion of the tendency of mutual aid within humanity as a critique of Social Darwinism’s essentialization of human nature as competitive. Seen in the light of his time (instead of simply as a timeless text), Kropotkin actually breaks human nature open with his critique in a way that humans can be seen to have a wide repertoire of ways of relating instead of a singular, essential human nature. But viewing Kropotkin in this way, of course, would turn Newman’s postanarchist project simply into a project of translating anarchism into post-structuralist and Lacanian language: the “post” would wither away without Newman’s reduced version of Kropotkin and Bakunin. Newman’s critique and, subsequently, his production of postanarchism, relies first on the production of a “classical anarchism” that is a mere cardboard cut-out of historical anarchism.

I would argue rather than being based on a posited singular human nature, anarchist theory mostly views the human as having an open potential, one that is constructed by exercising one’s power over one’s own life. In this sense, mutual aid is not an *essence* but a capacity, a potential, a tendency, part of the human repertoire of modes of relating. Competition, likewise, isn’t an essence but part of our repertoire. Kropotkin, we could note, didn’t argue that competition would disappear in an anarchist society. In fact, a better way to understand anarchism is as an argument about how we can use our power to recombine the multitude of ways of relating of which the human is capable. Anarchists propose to do this in order to form new and diverse ways of relating beyond those organized through domination. Neither cooperation nor competition are simply judged as good or bad within anarchist theory. There is a lot of cooperation within a corporation but it is hierarchized, compulsory and channeled to

ends that have escaped our desires. There is competition within a chess game, but this is not *essentially* negative. The key for anarchists is how these potentials are organized. Nor is this repertoire a closed, finished, or natural entity. It is very open to transformation; it expands in relation to our material conditions, our power over our own lives, and our creativity. This understanding of anarchism sheds light on the complexity of Bakunin in a way that Newman's does not.

In fact, Newman weakens his own argument when he brings up the "hidden contradiction" (p. 49) of Bakunin, a contradiction that only exists in the first place if you view Bakunin as an essentialist in the way Newman does. Newman argues that Bakunin "unintentionally" throws into question anarchism's foundation upon the goodness of human nature when he states that humans also have a desire for power. The contradiction isn't Bakunin's, but Newman's. It isn't that Bakunin founds his anarchism upon a good human nature, pure from power, and then contradicts himself by saying that people can desire power; rather, Bakunin does not seem to argue that humans have a singular human nature at all, but that humans have a multitude of complex desires.

Not coincidentally, Newman makes almost no mention of any contemporary anarchists,² perhaps because if he was to take contemporary anarchism seriously his project would shrink to more humble proportions.³ Although *some* contemporary anarchists may argue that humans have an essentially good human nature uncontaminated by power, such an argument is in no way necessary to or even widespread within the anarchist revolutionary project. In fact, contrary to Newman's assertions, most anarchists are not simply against power in the abstract and in all its forms. Anarchists use power in two senses. Anarchists are, for the most part, against Power, which means institutionalized and state power, but they are also for taking back their own power to control their own lives. Power, in the second sense, will not simply disappear in an anarchist society, but it would take a very different form from that of the state. Most anarchists would have no problem using their power in combination with that of others in order to end the reign of capital and the state. We are not uncontaminated by power; power is part of the way we exist in the world. Anarchists are, however, against the centralization and institutionalization of power and hierarchical power-relations; anarchists are against domination. But in Newman's unsophisticated view of anarchism all this is lost: anarchists simply believe that human nature is uncontaminated

by power, cut and dry.

After dealing with anarchism, Newman goes on to argue that Stirner, whom he places completely outside of anarchism, surpasses anarchism by critiquing the idea that the human has an essence and by positing the human as an empty space of exploration and creativity. Stressing Stirner's critique of the idea of a fixed human identity is a useful way to read him; yet, it could be noted that, while most anarchists aren't Stirnerites, anarchism is closer to this position than Newman would have us believe. Newman then moves quickly through clear, though by no means original, readings of Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari and on to more original chapters on Derrida and Lacan. Both Derrida and Lacan are used by Newman to critique post-structuralism.

This is perhaps the most interesting and useful section of the book. It should be stressed that Newman isn't arguing that postanarchism is a combination of anarchism and post-structuralism in the way that Todd May's *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* combines the two. Rather, he sees postanarchism as moving beyond both anarchism and post-structuralism. In this sense, Lacan plays a similar role in relation to post-structuralism as Stirner does in relation to anarchism, and it is out of the two that postanarchism is constructed. Newman also gives us a strong critique of identity politics, arguing, instead, for an understanding of individuals that stresses their singularity.

If, however, postanarchism isn't really *post* anarchism as I have argued it isn't, what is it *post*? I would first say that it does make a strong critique of post-structuralism that could be useful to anarchists. But it is also "post" in another sense; it is post-revolution. For Newman, revolution is a Manichean confrontation between a pure human essence and Power (capital for Marxists and the State alone for anarchists). Therefore, "revolutionary philosophies, such as anarchism, ... foresee the final overcoming of power and the eternal reign of freedom." (p. 90) And once the essentialized purity of human nature is shown to be a fiction, Newman argues, the whole revolutionary project falls apart. Newman calls this positing of a revolutionary subject against the state a relationship based on *ressentiment*, a subjectivity produced by a reaction to the state or capital, instead of one's own desires.

Thus Newman states: "Perhaps the whole idea of revolution should be abandoned for a form of resistance to power which is, like power itself, nebulous and dispersed" (p. 79); and "The question of the state... is one whose importance has diminished" (p. 166).

Yet, few anarchists would argue that a revolution would necessarily usher in an "eternal reign of freedom" or that power itself would simply disappear. But Newman's complex argument seems set up to get us beyond this messy little problem of revolution.⁴ For him, "resistance" then becomes an endless questioning of domination without any attempt to end the reign of the state (which Newman says we should no longer focus on) or capitalism (a discussion of which is almost completely absent from the book) or any attempt to posit the possibility of a new world beyond our present social system. The message seems to be, hone your critical skills but get used to the eternal present of power relations.

Unfortunately, this book's argumentation is often too quick to be convincing, and, in the end, it relies on many assertions to speed us to its conclusion pronouncing the coming birth of postanarchism. In the process much gets reduced and over-simplified, especially anarchism in its great variety. Of course anarchists can always sharpen their critical edge, but Newman's reduction of anarchism to a singular foundation actually blocks a self-critical look at anarchism. This book would have been much more interesting if it had taken a less one-dimensional view of anarchism, if it had taken it seriously, but such a perspective would have meant giving up most of what makes postanarchism *post*-anarchism.

Notes:

1. To be clear, Newman's work is not meant for anarchists, but for an academic audience. This is obvious from that fact that he chose an academic publisher for his work, one that charges a \$70.00 list price for this short work. So perhaps it is unfair to judge Newman's book from the perspective of anarchists at all. Then again, Newman's reductionist reading of anarchism should not go unchallenged.

2. Newman makes very brief mention of Murray Bookchin, John Clark (mostly to make an argument about Stirner), and Carol Erlich. Perhaps as a gauge of Newman's attention to contemporary anarchism we could look at his footnote description of Zerzan: Newman claims Zerzan's anarchism is based on "the power of language to liberate the world"! (p. 175 fn. 7)

3. This is also probably related to the academic nature of Newman's work, which takes place in academic libraries where the anarchist works one would find are mostly 100 year old "classics."

4. This seems somewhat akin to YaBasta!'s post-revolutionary, post-autonomist argument.

Guy Debord

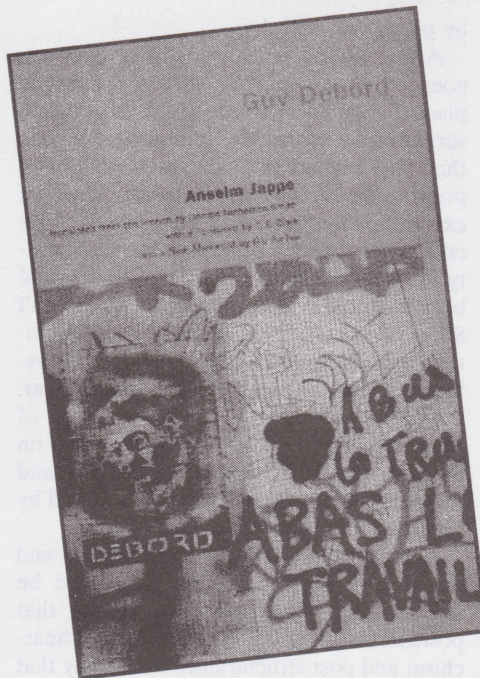
Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

Guy Debord by Anselm Jappe (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1999) 188 pp. \$18.95 paper, \$50.00 hardcover.

This very scholarly and erudite intellectual biography of Debord places the French filmmaker and theoretician within his proper philosophical context: that of Hegel and Marx. Jappe is also at pains to show that Debord is no precursor of post-modernism (especially as promoted by the likes of Baudrillard, Derrida, and others), but a thinker whose ideas are opposed to the decontextualized scribbles of the PM crew.

The first chapter (which takes up quite a lot of the whole book) is a detailed examination of Debord's concept of the spectacle. Jappe has done plenty of homework, tracking down the sources for many of Debord's statements (plagiarism being necessary—progress demanding it—Debord provided none). If someone has read *Society of the Spectacle* (in either of the three extant English versions) and still has trouble wrapping their mind around the concept of the spectacle and its uses as an analytical tool, Jappe's chapter explaining it will either make things much clearer, or muddy the waters beyond recognition. I, for one, was helped enormously; I think I have a more useful framework with which to understand it.

The more interesting parts of the book are when Jappe discusses the life of his



subject—the actual biography of Debord. Placed inside the political context of post-WWII Marxism (the fringes of which developed from dissident Trotskyism through anti-Leninist communism), Debord's own trajectory is tracked. From cinema to poetry to politics and back again, we get a good sense that Debord, while being unique as a thinker and actor, was still a product of his time.

This book should be in the library of anyone with even a mild interest in the Situationist International and its political legacy, especially now that all of Debord's films will be making the rounds in the coming months and years.

of gender equality, he is baffled by the challenges to his own thoroughly 19th century bourgeois insularity. What Parker is definitely confused by is the political outlook of the local anarchists, who improbably invite him to one of their clandestine meetings. They want to know if Czolgosz is sane or not, too. Coleman has this group speak the words of various published opinions of the American anarchist press of a hundred years ago, making the meeting a curious (but not so implausible) mix of perspectives. All in all, the novel doesn't really work for me. It's not that it isn't a good piece of fiction, but more that it doesn't really give the reader a feel for the American anarchist scene in 1901 beyond the speeches of the secret anarchists. I might have liked it better if Coleman had given us more of a story of Czolgosz (fictionalized of course), or even if he'd had more conversations with Lucy about anarchism and how it did or didn't fit in with her ideas of women's issues. Alas, all we get is a not very interesting story about Parker and his normally boring life. Even the chance meeting of Parker with "E. G. Smith" in the epilogue feels strained—a sort of gift-wrapped tidy ending.

2/15: The Day the World said NO to War

Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

2/15: The Day the World said NO to War by Connie Koch and Barbara Sauerman (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St, Oakland, CA 94612-1163, USA; AK Press, POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland; 2003) 224 pp. \$24.95 hardcover.

This is a small format collection of photographs mostly from the international pre-Iraq invasion anti-war demonstrations that took place on February 15, 2003 (plus a few other days). Lots of people, lots of colorful banners and faces, even some decent photography. Interspersed with the photos are some choice quotes from famous and not-so-famous people. It's a miniature coffee-table book—nice to look at when entertaining friends, but not a book to read or study. Like most photo albums, it's a nostalgic look back at more happy times; in this particular case, a time of moral outrage and instinctual solidarity, a time of focused anger and huge numbers. There's something of a wistful and sad quality about photo-albums though. There were over 11 million people (by most counts) out on the streets of the world's largest cities on that day (and

The Anarchist

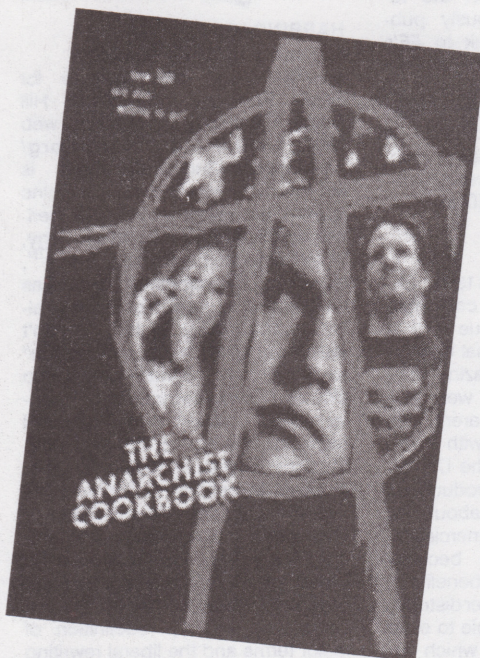
Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

The Anarchist: A Novel by Daniel A. Coleman (Willowbrook Press, POB 17211, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, 2001) 282 pp. \$14.95 paper.

Fiction is a tricky genre; I'm not a big fan myself. If the story is interesting, the characters are often two-dimensional; if the characters are interesting, the plot is often shallow; if the characters and the context of their actions are interesting, the writing is often mediocre. Historical fiction takes the interesting characters, mixes them with interesting settings, and the author tries to make the dialog contemporary to the setting. Coleman's novel does these

things well enough—the narrator is a medical school intern working at the prison where Leon Czolgosz, the assassin of President McKinley, is sent to await execution. It just so happens that Jonathan Parker (I was forced to wonder if the name was chosen to remind readers of the main narrator of Stoker's *Dracula*—Jonathan Harker) is an aspiring "alienist," the archaic term for psychiatrist, and he takes a personal and professional interest in determining if Czolgosz is sane or not. Complicating matters for our hero (Parker, not Leon, unfortunately) is that he is slowly falling for the daughter of his boss, the prison's medical director. Lucy (the same name as the love interest of Harker in *Dracula*—surely no accident) is a freethinking feminist, who throws Parker for a few loops in terms of the relations between the sexes. While not quite scandalized by her constant assertions

others), and yet clearly the decision to invade Iraq had already been made and put into motion. Public opinion is clearly not something that rulers are all that interested in or concerned about. The lack of this minimal self-consciousness makes the whole book seem undeservedly self-congratulatory. Even so, it's cool to see the widespread disgust with war that exists in all parts of the world. I don't really have a favorite photo from this collection, but there are several that are quite good esthetically. Overall, this would be a good book to show to your pro-war acquaintances, just to prove that you aren't a lonely wacko.



Video Review: *The Anarchist Cookbook* Reviewed by Lawrence Jarach

The Anarchist Cookbook directed by Jordan Susman; produced by Robert Latham Brown, Amy Greenspun & Jordan Susman; starring: Devon Gummersall, Dylan Bruno, Gina Philips, Sabine Singh; screenwriter: Jordan Susman; cinematographer: Brown Cooper; composer: Josh Kramon. Anamorphic Letterboxed Widescreen: 1.78. (2003) 101 minutes \$26.98 DVD.

I suppose it was inevitable that some student filmmaker would eventually get around to making a student film with the notorious (and one would have thought by now thoroughly discredited) *Anarchist Cookbook* as its inspiration. It also seems inevitable that anyone who takes that book seriously would produce a screenplay filled with

the same sorts of stupidities, confusions, and contradictions that permeate its pages. Despite the title and the pretensions of the characters' self-images, the plain fact is that there are no anarchists in this film. The protagonist, a sexually frustrated hetero, suburban college student, has no clearly discernable politics aside from some kind of visceral anti-status quo instinct—and even that seems more due to his suburban background than his hanging out with the bunch of misfits and losers who populate the multi-party dwelling where he lives (it would be quite a stretch to call it a collective house). The head of the house is supposed to be an anarchist, but he's only interested in generating media coverage with moralistic protests-as-usual—that is when he's not extolling the virtues of Swedish social democracy. Into this bizarre cluster of damaged characters comes a self-proclaimed nihilist, armed with the eponymous book. He's so cool and edgy that he introduces his politics this way: "I'm a nihilist. I don't believe in anything—even nihilism." Wow. Mister Danger. Mister Serious. Mister Idiot. Eventually Mister Nihilist introduces drugs and drug dealing to the household (leading to the overdose of the protagonist's best friend as well as unsavory contacts with the militia and skinhead kooks in town) as part of his grand plan to strike a blow against the state. He's going to attack the local university! Wow. Mister Danger aims his sights right at the top. All of this becomes too much for our hero, who then becomes a voluntary informant to the local FBI. The happy ending is his collection of reward money and joining his S/M Republican girlfriend on her internship at the Reagan Library. This film could have been funny if there weren't so many stupid prejudices about anarchism/anarchists in it. It could have been mildly entertaining if there had been even one sympathetic character in it. It could have been provocative if there had been even one remotely intelligent discussion of anarchism anywhere in it. But this stupid video can't be used to point out anything worthwhile—politically or cinematically.

Extreme Islam

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and entertaining examples included. Great because they are good examples of strange logic; entertaining because many are unintentionally funny. While this volume will not teach many basic Islamic ideas to its readers, it will expose many contemporary troublesome aspects of the Religion of the Prophet.

What is Anarchism?

Reviewed by Jason McQuinn

What is Anarchism? by Alexander Berkman (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St, Oakland, CA 94612-1163, USA; AK Press, POB 12766, Edinburgh, EH8 9YE, Scotland; 2003) 236 pp. \$13.95 paper.

Alexander Berkman wrote one of the most accessible of all introductions to social revolutionary anarchist ideas and practices at the invitation in 1926 of the Jewish Anarchist Federation of New York. In it he was keen to deal with the shortcomings of anarchist theory and practice in the—at the time, very recent—Russian Revolution. He also wanted to counter what he (and many other anarchist communists) considered the compromises with Bolshevism that were proposed in the "Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists." (In 1927 he wrote: "their platform is Bolshevik in spirit if not in words.")

The resulting book has been variously titled *Now and After: The ABC of Anarchism*, *The ABC of Anarchist Communism*, and in the present edition, *What is Anarchism?* As is to be expected, it now suffers from outdated (and sometimes oversimplified) language, arguments and style, however that does not completely detract from its message. It can still be rewardedly read today, by those unfamiliar with anarchist history, ideas and practices, as well as by anarchists interested in examining historical changes within the milieu since the 1920s.

At its heart Berkman's anarchist communism refused any easy compromises and reaffirmed the basic anarchist commitment to "freedom from being coerced, a chance to lead the life that suits you best."

The Malay Archipelago

continued from page 11

cally unprecedented, broke out in 1997, covering a great expanse of Southeast Asia with smoke and leading to a titanic air pollution crisis. A million and a half acres of forest burned, killing endangered animals and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to seek hospitalization. The smoke and ash from the fires caused algal blooms that killed coral reefs, thus destroying the habitat of many fish and other marine organisms. Market forces continue to drive deforestation and unsustainable hunting of rare animals at a rate that will, within a short time, leave nothing remaining of the extraordinary wild nature of this part of the world.

Anarchy is once again exchanging with all other anarchist and genuinely radical (anti-state, anti-capitalist) periodicals. And we will continue to try to review all such periodicals received in future issues. All reviews in this issue are by Jason McQuinn [JM], except those marked [A!] for Aragon!, [DM] for Dot Matrix, [JB] for John Burnett, and [LJ] for Lawrence Jarach.

Publishers please note: To ensure that your publications are reviewed in future issues, send all zines and magazines to our current reviewer address: C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA.

BAD TRIP

California in the Hour of Schwarzenegger and Bush unnumbered/undated (Approximations, POB 61036, Palo Alto, CA 94306-1036; e-mail: approximations@hotmail.com) is a 13-page, one-off essay analyzing the turn of events in the U.S. and California since the Bush and Schwarzenegger political victories. This is a fairly well written—but also pretty lightweight—radical leftist analysis from an ex-situationist whose perspectives seem to have diminished to the level of social ecology ideology over the years. Bookchinites may enjoy this; others looking for some bite may be disappointed. No price given. [JM]

BREAK THE CHAINS

#17/Winter 2004 (POB 12122, Eugene OR 97440) 20 pages. **Break the Chains** has always been a very self-conscious organization. This issue, the first after its successful conference of last summer, begins with an editorial that reflects on the broken promises and failures of the conference. The group even plans on collating and printing all of the commentary about the conference. The one point it does not reflect on, and that I have yet see any clear response to, is the problematic 'members only' shadow conference that was held at the same time as the Break the Chains conference, maybe next issue. This issue of the **BtC** zine is filled with information on (mostly west coast) political prisoners. There is an update on Free and Sherman Austin. There is an interesting essay by prisoner Matthew Lamont subtitled 'The mirror image of Uselessness'. There are some words from Stormy Ogden and Chrystos to round out this useful resource. [A!]

COMMUNICATING VESSELS

#12 (POB 1124, Madison WI 53701-1124) 56 pages, is inspired by surrealism and includes reprints of texts and art from the surrealist movement. There is such a wash of content from this magazine that I do not

know where to hang on, there is no context to the pieces and almost no editorial voice except to ask for donations. The topics covered in this issue include frapping (the practice of soldiers turning on their officers), Nationalism, the Spanish Civil War, alienation, and the war in Yugoslavia. In the piece on the Spanish Civil War is a thoughtful review of Michael Seidman's take: "These essays on working class 'individualism' are provocative in that they suggest that any vision of emancipation that departs from the betrayal of individualism demanded by 'sacrifice' to a false, higher collectivity is bound to provoke demoralization and then resistance from the 'atomized' individuals." Which is a challenging take on the question of whether a anarchist goal can be separated from an anarchist method. [A!]

FIFTH ESTATE

Vol.38, #363/Winter 2004 (POB 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220; e-mail: fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net & web site: www.fifthestate.org) Quarterly, 40 to 48-page magazine. People who would know tell me that **FE** was one of the (if not the) main proponents of anti-civ critique for many years. Makes sense since Fredy Perlman was connected to it back in the day. But I have read the past three issues, and would never have been able to tell that was its history. This issue, more than the previous two, has a variety of interesting articles (hint: the good ones mostly aren't the action ones). And the theme of this issue—Deconstructing Race—is certainly ambitious, which is good. Ambition is good. What's more discouraging is the lack of cohesion. Obviously, publishing smart articles by and about people of color is a *good thing* but, ideally, articles published in **FE** would speak in some way to the perspective that **FE** has been helping to build for so many years. While it is possible to go too far along this line—to be too constrained along certain themes—the more common tendency is to not have any particular theme at all. People are interesting to the extent that they have opinions, that they come from a particular perspective (could be more than one), and that those perspectives are thought out and lived. Projects are the same. **FE**

no longer seems to have a specific perspective, which precludes being able to talk about, for example, what it means to talk about race from that perspective. In this **FE** doesn't seem any different from dozens of other well-meaning, Left-prone, chaotic anarchist attempts. Even the reprints of articles previously published in **FE** don't speak to **FE**'s unique history. The editor change that happened not long ago of course made some differences inevitable, but ideally these kinds of changes build on the existing foundation. Cover price \$3; yearly subscription \$10 (4 issues). [DM]

GREEN ANARCHY

#15/Winter 2004 (POB 11331, Eugene OR, 97440; email: collective@greenanarchy.org) Issue #15 of **GA** marks a dramatic format change from newspaper to magazine, and the amount of effort that went into layout and graphics is apparent. This is a very attractive issue with a distinct look. While I value the DIY-ish feel of less expensive productions (and feel apprehension about the [usually] increased commercialization of products that become glossy), there are obvious benefits to glossiness—including wider distribution and allowing for people to save and re-read old issues, which requires a format that can hold up. It also requires content that is meaningful and relevant in coming years, and this issue, like the last one, provides that as well. Intriguingly, this issue manages the difficult feat of being at the same time angry and upbeat (or is that just me?). This is theory with its feet firmly in practice, and criticism with suggestions on how to do things differently; it is, in other words, an excellent example of insider critique—a community speaking to itself with intelligence, insight and creativity. The notes about animals acting out and the Waldorf and Statler column continue to be high points (and I appreciate the review of the new Paris release since I forgot I was waiting for it and can now go get it). Minor complaints: graphics behind text make the text too hard to read, the vision of romantic macho predator as iconic of wildness (inside cover) is boring, and the use of "pig" as a pejorative (especially by anti-civ folks) continues to get on my nerves. Other than that

this is a very mature effort from some very mature people. Sample copies are \$4 in the U.S., \$5-7 elsewhere; U.S. subscriptions are \$15/5 issues. [DM]



HARBINGER

A Journal of Social Ecology

#1-#3/undated (c/o Institute for Social Ecology, 1118 Maple Hill Road, Plainfield, VT, 05667; web site: www.social-ecology.org/harbinger/vol3no1/index.html) is not the more well-known CrimethInc journal, but rather an irregular periodical of Murray-Bookchin ideology, which includes his Social Ecology™, Libertarian Municipalism™ as well as his desiccated version of communalism (unfortunately for him he can't steal sole rights to "communalism" since there are too many others who also use this well-worn label). Regular readers of **Anarchy** magazine will recognize the typical tropes of M-B ideology: a fetish for Reason and the mystical invocation of "coherence" where it is absent, anarcho-Stalinist-style smears, false dichotomies [social ecologists will "change the world," all others can only "change... psyches"], idiosyncratic (when not completely bizarre) redefinition of major terms and the liberal rewriting of history—in which Murray was usually there first, if he does say so himself, even if nobody else ever saw him. (See Bob Black's *Anarchy after Leftism*, the forthcoming *Withered Anarchism* anthology and forthcoming *Nightmares of Reason* for more details than you really need to know!) At least these days Bookchin no longer is maintaining any pretenses that he is an anarchist; the mask has been dropped, though some of his epigones still wear theirs. These issues include several minor reworkings of the same basic exposition of Bookchin's highly ideological version of communalism (individual autonomy be damned, only rational Society can be "free," and it's just too bad if you thought genuine freedom meant "no rule"). Issue #2 includes an interview with the Director Emeritus himself. Issue #3 includes a sketchy vision of "Economics in a Social Ecological Society" by Peter Staudenmaier, and the latest reworking of Bookchin's new communalist slant (minus the

anarchist aspects of his earlier version, "Communalism: The Democratic Dimension of Anarchism" in a revised essay now titled "The Communalist Project." Subscriptions are available with membership in the Institute at \$50/2 issues. [JM]

LITTLE BLACK STAR

#30-32/Sep.-Oct. 2003 (POB 197, Lewisburg, PA 17837) 4 pages, unpaginated zine. **LBS** is a print version of the kind of journalism you would normally see on the web. If you are looking to hand your co-worker articles about how Wesley Clark is not anti-war, how Fox news makes you stupid, and how Iraq recently opened its first Burger King then a subscription to LBS is a must have. [AI]

NORTHEASTERN ANARCHIST

Theoretical Magazine of the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists

#8/Fall-Winter 2003 (POB 230685, Boston, MA 02123) This 46-page issue has little about Platformism and a lot more coverage of various tendencies within working class self-organization—the Italian Base Union movement, Syndicalism (internationally), and Council Communism—as well as workplace struggles, and particular strategies (flying squads). Two workplace struggles involving anarchists are studied in some detail, one in Somerville MA and the other in Montreal. An innovative inside-outside strategy was used: getting conventional union representation while at the same time organizing autonomously, both within the workplace and among supporters in the wider community. Autonomous organization could do many things a weakened conventional labor union (bureaucratized and tied down by fines and injunctions) could not. Featured is a review of Jeremy Brecher's *Strike!*—which covers US labor history, and an unfortunate attempt to shoe-horn the Spanish Revolution into a Platformist construct. There is even what appears to be a small olive branch offered to anarcho-primitivism in a letter taking up the last page, "Attempting to Bridge the Red and Green in Anarchism." Cover price: \$4.00. [JB]

ONWARD

Vol. 4, #1/Summer 2003 (POB 32156, Detroit MI 48232) 16 pages, newsprint. The bad news is that this is another terrible issue of this anarchist newspaper. If you hoped that the move from Florida to the Midwest was going to turn it from a slick rag suitable for selling at rallies and street corners into something a little more thoughtful you will be disappointed. It continues to contain very little original content. It is mostly reprints from anarchist press releases and rewordings of Indymedia

style journalism. The good news is, if the rumors are correct, that the collectives that were responsible for taking over this publication have decided to lay it to rest. This is likely the last *Onward* we will ever see. [AI]

REASON TO BELIEVE

#10 (145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds, LS6 1LJ U.K.) 72 pages, newsprint zine. This is a collectively run, DIY punk rock, ink-stains on your hands kind of a zine. There is a strong showing from your usual content. Interviews with Knifed, I Shot Cyrus, and Vialka in China. There is a tour diary with FPO/T.O.R. There are columns about not being married to punk politics and a few nice bits about some political action around the *RiB* scene. Like many magazines of this type there are too many ads, but the upside is that the magazine is free (in Europe). [AI]

THE THOUGHT

#137/Sept.-Dec. 2003 (Philosophers Guild, POB 10760, Glendale, AZ 85318-0760; e-mail: guildmaster@worldnet.att.net) is 28-page news-letter covering an eclectic range of topics. This issue includes a meditation on "The Fugitive" by Allen Thornton ("You are indeed the fugitive"), a competently-written short story by Christopher Berry titled "Super VHS," and V.R. Smith's bitter celebration of "America's Sawdust Caesar." Single copies are still \$2; subscriptions are \$11/6 issues. [JM]

WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE

#14 (Venomous Butterfly Publications, 818 SW 3rd Ave. PMB 1237, Portland, OR, 97204; e-mail: acraticus@yahoo.com) 56 pages. From arguing the impossibility of a neutral technology to discussing the hubris of nanotech to explaining the difference between reformist and revolutionary activities, etc., issue #14 of this insurrectionary zine is nicely written, educated without being academic and more personal than the last one (a plus in my eyes) while maintaining its emphasis on theory. Included are an article on sexuality (with a nod to Reich), the most coherent critique of politics I've yet read (by Il Pugnale), and my favorite—the well-titled "Back Side of History" by Massimo Passamani, as well as mini-reports on various actions in far away places (at least far away from me). It is good to know what is happening (far away from me). Ongoing question—the point of writing that integrates practice and theory explicitly as well as implicitly. We'll see where that goes. This is a double issue (\$5) because quarterly schedules can be challenging. Next Spring is when quarterly production should start again. In general, cost is \$2 per issue, \$5 for 4 issues in North America. [DM]

Non-English-language materials received

EL ACRATADOR

Boletín Anarquista

#76-#78 (Centro Social Anarquista La Revuelta c/San Segustin, 18 50080 (La Madalena) Zaragoza, Spain) Short and sweet periodical (no indication of how often), basically one large page folded in half. A schedule of events (single and ongoing) that occur at the Centro, with other news of interest and announcements of activities. There's a radio station connected to this project as well. In Spanish. No price listed (presumably free to people who live in Zaragoza). [LJ]

LOS AMIGOS DE LUDD

Boletín de Información

Anti-Industrial

#2/Marzo 2002 thru #5/Mayo 2003 (C/Ave María, 39-2ºDcha Ext., 28012 Madrid, Spain) is a relatively new 36 to 40-page, Spanish-language anti-industrial anarchist journal. Issue #2 includes an overview of "Utopia and Misery in the Industrial World," along with an essay on "Science and Biotechnology" and an interview with René Riesel. Issue #5 features an examination of "The Myth of Progress, Abundance and Technology in the Anarchist Movement." Each issue is densely packed with articles in fairly small print, but the high quality, good contrast paper keeps it readable. Cover price is 1.50 euros. I'd send a few dollars for a sample copy. [JM]



ANARCH AKBAR

#1/June-July 2003 (POB 131, 40030 Sumy, Ukraine; e-mail: anarch_akbar@inbox.ru) is a new 20-page Russian-language zine, including a translation of John Zerzan's "Twilight of the Machines" (from *Anarchy* #54), along with information on the Dutch Euro-Dusnie collective. No price listed; send a donation. [JM]

CNT

Organ of the National Confederation of Labor

#297/January 2004 (Pza. Tirso de Molina 5 2º Izq. 29012 Madrid, Spain) Lots of labor news, especially

concerning the recent unrest on the Seville docks (with some cool photos of dockworkers using slingshots against the cops), some commentary about the new immigration laws, annoyance at the pro-US and pro-war stance of the Spanish government, various declarations from the AIT (the anarcho-syndicalist international to which the CNT has been affiliated for over 70 years). More reviews than other syndicalist periodicals. Plus merchandise (calendars and t-shirts) and a crossword puzzle. Cover price: 1.25 Euros. In Spanish. [LJ]

ECOTOPIA

(HEM Apdo. 364 18080 Granada Spain) This is the third issue of a green anarchist pamphlet-sized periodical. Includes a translation from *Willful Disobedience*, a brief history of the resistance happening in West Papua, native resistance in Chile, a statement by eco-anarchist prisoner Marco Camenisch, and an anti-genetic engineering essay. Kind of a "best-of" collection from the insurrectionary green anarchist perspective. In Spanish. .50 Euros. [LJ]

SU GAZETINU

(Via Buonarroti 2, 08100 Nuoro, Italy) This is a regular bulletin about prisons, anarchist prisoners, and prisoner support focussed on Italy, but containing lots of information on anarchist captives in other countries in Europe. In Italian. 1.50 Euros. [LJ]

NIHIL

#1/Sep.-Dec. 2003 (Via m. Melas n. 24 - 09040 GUASILA (CA), Italy) This Italian periodical is in a journal format with a cotton cover and professional presentation. The orientation of this journal appears to be insurrectionary with environmental sympathies. Some of the articles are "The Insurrectionary perspective," "The language and its meaning," and "The fight against the Sardinia Gold Mining." [AI]

SOLIDARIDAD OBRERA

Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor in Catalonia

#317/September 2003 (Hospital 101, 08001 Barcelona, Spain) The usual labor news, plus lots about arrests and detentions (in Thessalonika—they have been freed in the meantime, Valencia, and Barcelona). Some articles on the attempted evictions of various ateneos (kind of a cross between a café and an infoshop) and a couple of book reviews. *Soli* has begun a series of annual supplements, and number two is on the Situationists; four full pages give a pretty fair treatment of this contentious subject. Included is a bibliography of available texts in Spanish. In Spanish and Catalan. Cover price: 1 Euro. [LJ]

Destroy the Athens Olympics 2004!

On January 22nd several hundred anarchist and anti-globalization demonstrators marched through central Athens in protest against the 2004 Olympics and the repressive security measures planned for the August 13-29 games. The 400 demonstrators marched behind a black banner—reading “Destroy Olympics 2004”—near the Greek parliament building before dispersing. Athens police and riot squads refrained from attack.

According to the Associated Press, protest organizer Nikos Yiannopoulos—speaking during a rare snow storm—argued, “We are facing Olympic terrorism...Our fundamental rights are being trampled on in the name of security...We won’t stop our action, not even in August.”

The demonstrators chanted “not one spectator, not one volunteer at the repression Olympics,” while displaying colorful banners. One of the banners portrayed the 2004 Olympic mascots, Phevos and Athena, wearing police riot gear with the logos of Coca Cola and McDonald’s on their shields.

The Greek state is planning to spend more than \$750 million (USD) for 2004 Olympic security. 10,000 soldiers and 40,000 police are being mobilized for the games. The city of Athens is also receiving assistance with Olympic security from seven other countries, including Israel and the United States. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency is helping to gather information on potential threats from around the world.

In the face of increasingly vocal criticism, the Athens police have been forced to launch a public relations campaign with full-page advertisements in the mainstream press, attempting to win popular support for the massive campaign of repression. But critics complain that surveillance cameras currently being installed around Athens are unlikely to come down after the Olympics, and are angry at the heavy restrictions planned on street protests during the games.

Another organizer, Panos Totsikas argued that “We will be living in a police-run city. The military is being given a new role... Athens will look like a war zone, with exclusion areas, helicopters. We don’t want this....” Instead, he explained, “We want to express our opinions freely...We won’t let our rights be taken away under the pretext of our protection.”

Olympic protestors also complain that some of Attica’s most important free spaces and parks have already been destroyed and are now being replaced by tons of cement as Athens’ image gets its Olympic makeover. While in the city centre, police vans and



Anarchist and anti-globalization demonstrators in downtown Athens.

armed officers have already been added to the urban scenery.

Update on the Montreal anarchist bookshop struggle

Note: Readers of *Anarchy* magazine will be aware that in Montreal, a good number of anarchists are fighting to regain control of the anarchist bookshop (Alternative Bookshop) and the building that several anarchists bought for the milieu back in 1982. An Anarchist Distributors’ Coalition has been formed (for more info: diffuseurslibertaires@yahoo.ca). It’s boycotting the leftist-controlled bookshop, and it’s holding autonomous distro Kiosks periodically. Statements denouncing the Alternative bookshop’s drift away from the anarchist milieu have been distributed and increasingly the bookshop is in dire straits, having lost about half of the 15 members it had last summer (at the big assembly). What follows are excerpts from an interview that bookshop staffers recently had with a well-known student paper, the *McGill Daily*.

“Moishe, a senior member of the AEELI [the non-profit organization which legally

owns the building] working at the bookstore, is optimistic about the future of AEELI, which currently houses an art gallery (second floor) and a record shop (third floor). ‘I want the building to be a meeting place for all those involved in social struggles. I don’t mean just the activists involved in these anti-authoritarian movements. I want to welcome the people that are being personally involved in these struggles, so they can learn more about activism and deal with their issues through social activism. Everybody is welcome here. The more people that aren’t activists, the better.’”

Aaron Lakoff, who also volunteers at the shop, waxes on the different strains of anarchy. ‘In Montreal right now, there is a big divide between what we call the “capital-A” anarchists and the “little-a” anarchists. Capital A being a rather dogmatic, by the book, purist ideology, based on a lot of western European anarchist thought and texts by authors like Bakunin, Kropotkin and Marx. There is a tendency within capital A anarchy to reject national liberation struggles and to not be involved in race politics. In my opinion, we reject that here at the collective, we would consider ourselves to be “little-a” anarchists. I think that’s reflected in the literature we carry [a variety of social justice and group struggle pamphlets and texts line the shelves].’”

C.A.L. Press Books

Elements of Refusal

John Zerzan's first collection of essays in a new, expanded Second Edition! "Here it is axiomatic that art, language, time, industrialism, number, technology, work and other aspects of our social lives—all hailed as the liberators of humanity—are, in fact, the co-conspirators of domestication and domination." -from the Preface. (C.A.L. Press, 1999) 320 pp. **\$14.95** paper. [Look for a new hardcover edition in 2004.]

Anarchy after Leftism

Bob Black's recent—and possibly most entertaining—book. A compact, intelligent & compelling demolition job on both Murray Bookchin's atrocious *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism* and his overall philosophical and radical pretensions. Highly recommended. (C.A.L. Press, 1997) 176 pp. **\$7.95** paper.

Future Primitive & Other Essays

A collection of some of John Zerzan's best critical essays from *Anarchy & Demolition Derby*, including "Future Primitive," "The Mass Psychology of Misery," "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism" & "Tonality and the Totality," along with his "Nihilist's Dictionary." (C.A.L. Press & Autonomedia, 1994) 185 pp. **\$6.95** paper.

Withered Anarchism

Upcoming collection on the increasingly withered anarchism of Murray Bookchin, featuring critical essays by Bob Black (author of the title essay, "Withered Anarchism"), Lawrence Jarach ("Don't Judge a Bookchin by his Cover-ups"), Jason McQuinn, Michael William and others. (C.A.L. Press, 2004) **\$11.95** paper.

Revolution of Everyday Life

Raoul Vaneigem's still-explosive masterpiece on radical subjectivity in a world of things and their prices. This book has been serialized in past issues of *Anarchy*, but it's well worth reading & re-reading. One of the two major works of the Situationist International, it played a role in the gestation of the student uprising and general strike of May, 1968 in France. (Left Bank & Rebel Press, 1967, 1994) 279 pp. **\$15.95** paper.

Against His-Story, Against Leviathan

Fredy Perlman's most important work presents his account of the world history of civilizations from their origins as they devoured primitive peoples and other civilizations on their way to the dead-end we know too well as the present day. A poetic and deeply subversive reversal of perspective on history. (Black & Red, 1983) 302 pp. **\$9.95** paper.

The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism

Fredy Perlman's penetrating critique of nationalism left and right. This is an essential essay for understanding nationalism without illusions. (Black & Red, 1985) 58 pp. **\$2.95** paper.

History of the Makhnovist Movement

Peter Arshinov's inspiring firsthand account of the most important anarchist movement of the Russian Revolution, centered on the partisans organized by Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine, who fought Ukrainian nationalists, the Bolshevik counter-revolution and the Czarist White armies from 1918 until defeat in 1921. (Black & Red, 1987) 284 pp. paper. **Currently Out-of-Print!** We'll carry this again as soon as it's reprinted.

We, the Anarchists!

Stuart Christie's new critical analysis of what went wrong with the FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) and CNT (anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Workers) during the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, leading to the counter-revolutionary collaboration of these organizations with the Catalanian and Spanish governments. (Meltzer Press, 2000) 127 pp. **\$15.95** paper. **NEW and recommended!**

Running on Emptiness

John Zerzan's most recent collection of essays, subtitled "The Pathology of Civilization." It includes many of his more recent contributions to *Anarchy* magazine, including "Time and Its Discontents" and "That Thing We Do," along with a revealing interview by Derrick Jensen and an autobiographical essay titled "So...How Did You Become an Anarchist?" (Feral House, 2002) 214 pp. **\$11.95** paper. **NEW!**

Society of the Spectacle

Guy Debord's highly important masterwork updating Marx's theory of commodity fetishism for an electronically-mediated world. "Everything which was once lived has moved into its representation." One of the two central works of the Situationist International. (Black & Red, 1967, 1983) unpaginated **\$7.95** paper.

Situationist International Anthology

Ken Knabb's definitive translation and collection of the most important articles from the S.I.'s French journal, including those by Asger Jorn, Ivan Chtcheglov, Guy Debord, Raoul Vaneigem, Attila Kótanyi, René Viénet & others. Indispensable. (Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981) 406 pp. **\$14.95** paper.

Journey through Utopia

Marie Louise Berneri's thorough and perceptive study of the most important utopian writings since Plato's *Republic*. (Freedom Press, 1950) 339 pp. **\$9.95** paper.

Against Civilization

A new anthology of "Readings and Reflections" put together by John Zerzan, including Hesiod on through to the "primitivists" of today, by way of Rousseau, William Morris, and Fourier, among others—51 selections in all. (Uncivilized Books, 1999) **\$9.95** paper. **Currently Out-of-Print!** We'll carry this again as soon as it's reprinted.

Passionate and Dangerous: Conversations with

Midwestern Anti-authoritarians & Anarchists Well, maybe not all that "dangerous," but this new survey of the midwestern anarchist scene will give you a lot better idea of who is active and what's going on out there! (1999) 70 pp. **\$4.00** magazine format.

Anarchy T-Shirts

Sorry, the T-shirts are now completely sold-out. Look for a new design—probably ready by the time the next issue of *Anarchy* comes out!

We'll soon have important new paperback editions of Richard Gombin's *The Origins of Modern Leftism & The Radical Tradition* (**\$7.95**), and Michael Seidman's *Workers against Work* (**\$9.95**) available from *Insubordinate Editions*. Please send a S.A.S.E. if you'd like a slightly longer list including additional titles available from C.A.L. Press.

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#57

The Exploited Show Riot

Mindless Madness or Destruction with a Radical Edge?

On the morning following the canceled Exploited show riot, I flipped on the radio to catch the news. A promo for the daily phone-in announced that the show would be on the riot.

Aging, irate suburbanites denouncing the mayhem was what I more or less expected. Instead, the callers mainly were irate punks denouncing the mayhem. The riot was an "unfortunate" event in the words of two callers and was termed "really stupid" by a third. Paul Gott, frontman for the long-running Montreal punk band the Ripcordz, said that the riot would give punk a bad name.

However, these comments, which became part of a broader chorus of condemnation from the usual quarters, simplify and distort events. The riot has mainly been seen in black and white terms. In my opinion, a more nuanced version is in order.

The Riot

In late 2003, the British punk band The Exploited and the California group Total Chaos played in Vancouver and then re-crossed the border to continue their tour in the States. A month later, the two groups arrived at the Quebec border on their way to play in Montreal.

As was the case *en route* to Vancouver, the bands did not state their real reason for coming to Canada. However, this time it didn't work. According to the groups, Canada Customs was waiting for them. Wattie of The Exploited recounts:

"We told them we were on a road trip and they kept saying, 'You're a band,' and we'd say no. Then they showed us a picture of us onstage and said, 'Is that you?' And that was me, okay. So we were caught lying, and it just escalated. I apologized, I said, 'I'm sorry for lying to you, I'm in a band, and we just want to come and play.' And they still wouldn't let us in."

A Customs spokesperson would later claim that three of the musicians in addition had "serious criminal records" and thus were not admissible to Canada.

At 7:15 pm the management of the Medley, the club where the bands were to play, learned from Customs that the groups would not be allowed across the border. Fearing potential trouble, they called to request a police presence when the 800 to 1000 showgoers in line were informed that the gig was canceled. The police claim that they received a call at 7:44. Shortly thereafter, 15-20 cops arrived. Medley staff then informed those in



line of the cancellation.

Many concert goers went home and trouble would not start for fifteen or twenty minutes. People requesting a refund tried to get into the Medley and were refused entry. Bouncers threw sticks and objects at ticket holders. A punk used pepper spray he was holding on the bouncers. A bouncer used a squeegee to hit a punk. The doors were locked and people who gripped the doors were struck at by bouncers with clubs. Medley staff inside sprayed a chemical substance at concert goers outside. The situation had reached a point of high tension. "People were angry," one person present was quoted as saying.

A half-dozen punks got on one side of a car and began to push and rock it. They were unable to completely upend it but managed to push it over on its side. Other cars were flipped over and punks leapt on top of them. Cries of "We want to riot" were heard and "Let's start a war" (the title of an Exploited song). Medley display cases with pictures of upcoming gigs were smashed (seven of eight cases would be broken). Windows of a photocopy shop just up the street were broken and a computer from the shop was hurled at a car. "They had a totally unexpected—but quite efficient—way of jumping on the windshields to cave them in," one person present said, describing the method used by some rioters. Material from a nearby construction site was also used to smash car windows. Several cars were set

on fire and emitted dense black smoke.

Overwhelmed, the police had completely lost control. "It happened so fast; I've never seen anything like it," a cop present commented. The riot squad was called in but would take a *long* time to assemble and arrive. In the meantime, one cop car was pelted with objects and driven off. A ragged line of half a dozen cops was eventually established on St. Denis just below Ste. Catherine (both major commercial arteries). A huge crowd had gathered and two fire trucks coming down St. Denis made their way with difficulty through the throng.

"Circulate, there is nothing to see," could be heard from the amplification system of a parked patrol car. People were told that if they didn't move, they would be arrested. The warning was ignored. A man tried to sneak through the line of cops in the direction of the Medley. A cop ran after him, clubbed him a couple of times on the back, grabbed him by his leather jacket, and pushed him in the direction he had come from. The man crossed back through the police line and began to gesticulate and insult the cops. Others started to yell and throw bottles and trash cans at the cops. Portable metal "no parking" signs with thick bases were other conveniently available objects frequently used by rioters. The cops retreated part of the way down the block. A man picked up a metal no parking sign, yelled "class war" and hurled it at a window of Jacob Connection, a chic chain store

clothing boutique on the corner of Ste. Catherine and St. Denis. Other people attacked windows and the riot began to spread beyond the block where the initial trashing had taken place. A man with a metal bar smashed the front window of an expensive car parked on Ste. Catherine. A punk shoved a metal no parking sign through the back window of a cop car further up St. Denis.

A block further along Ste. Catherine, five windows had been broken at Archambault, a retail music store owned by the huge Quebecor media conglomerate. Looters had entered as an employee meeting was going on and proceeded to help themselves to thousands of dollars worth of CDs. Finally a cop car pulled up on the sidewalk in front of the store. A man clutching a pile of CDs emerged through a window, made his way around the patrol car, crossed the street, and entered a park. The patrol car remained where it was and the cop inside did not come out.

A couple of blocks further down Ste. Catherine, a group of punks had decided to loot an SAQ store (a government-run liquor outlet). One of them thrust a metal no parking sign through a window pane. A couple of employees inside the closed store moved to the back. Two punks entered the store and reemerged through the window with a couple of bottles of hard liquor each. A cop car arrived, drove onto the sidewalk in front of the SAQ store, then switched into reverse and backed up into the middle of the street. One of the punks, who was now across the street, threw an object at the cop car. A man picked up one of the metal no parking signs and ran toward the cop car, which retreated down St. André.

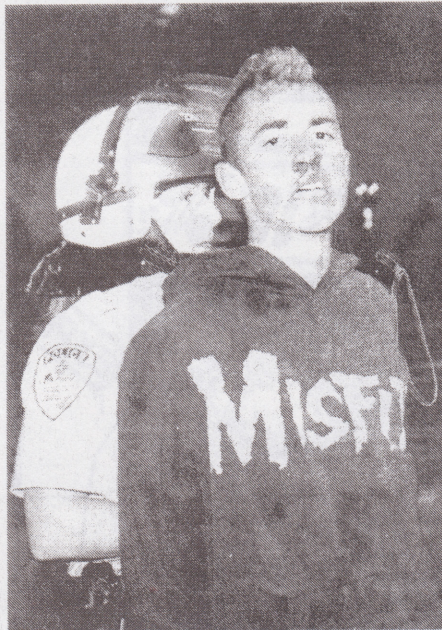
Back at the corner of St. Denis and Ste. Catherine the shieldless cops had formed a circle to try to protect themselves. A cop emerged from the circle, clubbed a man once or twice, and was then pulled back into the circle by the other cops.

Several more stores received broken windows such as a Pharmaprix drugstore outlet. The sprinkler system went off when a fire was started in the Jacob Connexion boutique.

When the riot squad finally arrived, the police were unable to collar the looters, who melted away. A police cordon was thrown up around the Archambault store. Riot cops formed lines and exercised crowd control.

Meanwhile, a group of 30 punks vandalized a copshop which was apparently empty at the time. One person was arrested when the cops eventually arrived.

Between 11:00 pm and midnight a dozen cops showed up at Café Chaos, a bar near the riot site. The cops began to club people hanging out outside. At 2:00 am a police supervisor returned to the club and asked how many people were still inside but bar



personnel refused to say.

In all 42 cars were damaged and 10 completely destroyed. Three cop cars were damaged, several cops suffered injuries, and 11 businesses were hit. Few arrests took place: five adults and one minor for mischief and disturbing the peace; and a woman named Anny-Klaud Potvin was charged with assaulting a cop and participation in a riot. According to one account, following her arrest she broke a window in the cop car she was placed in and was subsequently transferred to a paddy wagon.

Reaction to the Riot

The media unsurprisingly revelled in and reviled the riot. Sensationalist aspects such as photos of burning cars received front-page treatment and the event became more than just a one-day wonder—in effect a two-day one with the second day devoted to follow-up articles such as portraits of The Exploited. The media refrained from using political labels to describe the rioters with the exception of the tabloid *Journal de Montréal*, Quebec's largest-circulation daily, which referred to the rioters as "young anarchists." Why this term was used is unclear, though this publication has no great love for punks and anarchists. To ascribe the riot to anarchists accords us more credit than we deserve, though there no doubt were some actual anarchists sprinkled in.

Peter Yeomans, a municipal politician, called the riot "totally unacceptable" and threatened to "tighten up on how things are scrutinized" with respect to shows.

Rumours flew as to who was behind the riot. "Troublemakers who hang out downtown" were responsible, a police spokesperson claimed: "These people were not there by chance: They were prepared."

On the other hand, Caro, a woman who works at L'X, a punk club, stated in a newspaper interview that the rioters were not from Montreal ("I saw their faces and they're not from here.") The outside agitator theory....

Published reactions from the punk milieu were uniformly negative with the exception of a couple of comments which were phoned in and appeared in the anonymous "Rantline" column of the *Mirror*, a local alternative weekly. There were also criticisms of the riot in the anarchist milieu, although from a different perspective. What follows is a list of some of these critiques. Comments of mine then follow.

Some critics felt it was the bands' own fault for not getting through Customs ("The bands acted like idiots at the border, and seeing as Canada already has enough idiots, they were turned back" -Bazooka).

Others called the riot pointless. "These fanatic crazies were unable to comprehend that it was just a *show*" commented Justin Grow, a punk who sent a text to the daily *La Presse*. On a similar note, a man who works at Café Chaos said, "It is completely ridiculous to smash up the city because a show is canceled." Others stated that the riot was poorly focussed. Epitomizing this was a cartoon in an alternative weekly. The cartoon shows a burning overturned car in front of a shop called Mom and Pop's Fruit Store. Its window is smashed and a circle @ is on the store and an Exploited graffiti is on the wall next door. An elderly couple across the street embraces and looks at the devastation. The title above the cartoon is: "How *not* to smash the State." In the words of another critic, "All this material destruction of course leads nowhere and represents a deplorable loss for a number of perfectly innocent individuals."

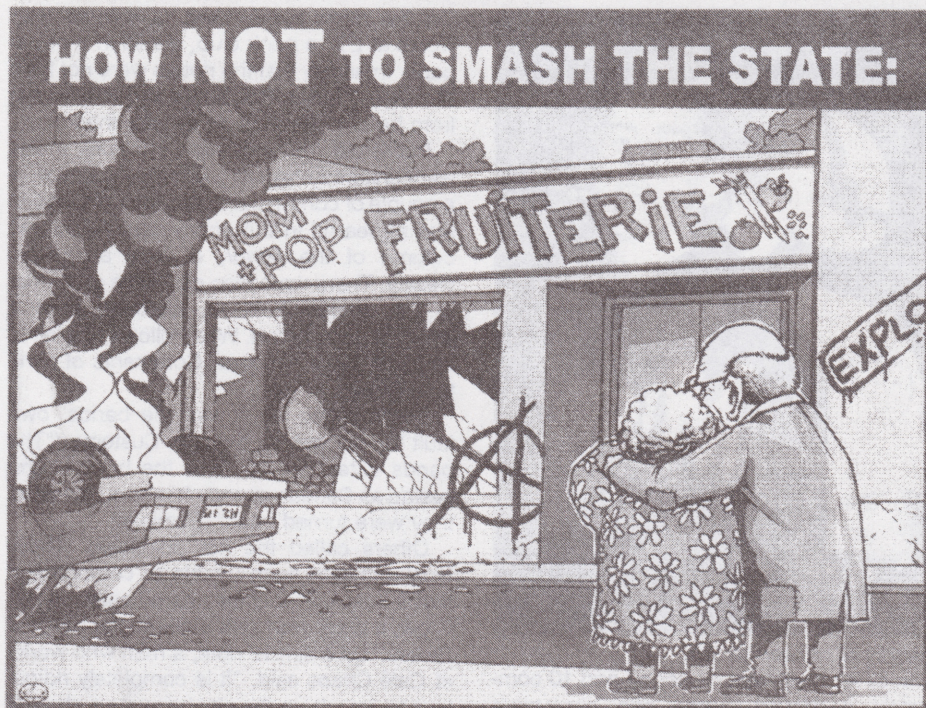
Others said that only a minority of those present rioted and that the image of all punks will suffer. Punks will experience increased repression, felt some.

Potshots were also taken at The Exploited who were termed "buffoons" and "goofballs" and their fans portrayed as drug/alcohol-addled with a penchant to destroy whatever is at hand.

A Radical Edge?

Condemned by critics as a tantrum by crybabies denied their lollypop, the riot undeniably was in part a response to repression. Directed against the bands in refusing to let them across the border; and against the concertgoers when they were unable to hear the bands.

Anarchists have a particular take on this because we believe that states and borders are illegitimate; people should be able to move freely about the globe without government interference. The problem therefore is not that the bands lied but that they felt



obliged to; they should not have been put through this humiliation. As has been frequently pointed out, if they had been let through, there wouldn't have been a riot.

There is also evidence that another type of repression came into play—that in the days leading up to the riot, punks from out of town who had come for the concert were harassed and ticketed by the cops, on top of the usual harassment meted out to local punks on a daily basis. In some cases it was thus a question of people directly reacting to what directly oppressed them. Since attacking Customs was unfeasible, they took out their wrath on the representatives of the state at hand—the cops.

A Tactical Victory

For the participants, the riot was a major tactical victory. It was able to unfold despite the fact that over a dozen cops were already on hand at the outset. The police were completely outmanoeuvred and neutralized. Much damage was done in little time and looters made off with thousands of dollars worth of goods. Few arrests took place and only one person received serious charges. In a classic strategy, people took advantage of a void of authority and then retreated when overwhelming force appeared.

This defeat for the cops took place in a context where they have been on the offensive, making mass arrests at demos, and in one case, before the demo even began.

Poorly Focussed?

Some in the radical milieu had no problem with riots as such but felt that the Exploited

riot was poorly focussed. In the opinion of one anarchist, if it had been a question of Crass fans, the riot would have had clearer targets.

However, it is worth noting that in the near-to-downtown area where the Medley is located, there are no "Mom and Pop's Fruit Stores" as such. High rents mean that considerable revenues need to be generated, eliminating most small businesses of this nature. There are thus plenty of high-value targets and others which are non-problematic from a political viewpoint. At the same time, it is true that a couple of the targeted businesses were questionable, especially a modest restaurant just up the street from the Medley. A number of the businesses were chain stores and thus fair game. An especially valid target was the Archambault store which, as part of the Quebecor empire, is about as far from a mom and pop's store as one can get. In an op-ed piece in the *Montreal Gazette* entitled "Archambault takes on Quebec's music pirates," Archambault President and CEO Natalie Larivière describes the company as "a leader in CD production, distribution and retailing." In the piece she explains that Quebecor TV stations and dailies (such as the *Journal de Montréal*) have initiated a campaign to discourage free downloading. Lauding a flurry of lawsuits against downloaders launched by the Recording Industry Association of America, Larivière said that Archambault is spearheading a parallel campaign north of the border ("We have already done the groundwork to launch an initiative similar to the RIAA campaign").

These people clearly deserved what they

got.

That much of the destruction was directed at cars was one of the distinguishing features of the riot. Some have interpreted this as meaning that the riot was directed at anything at hand. Though there may be some truth in this, cars remain just as valid targets as chain stores. The vehicles destroyed that day will no longer kill or maim or pollute the planet. After all, how many people have been killed by cars in comparison to those killed by rioting punks?

In the Rantline column a person complained, "My car got smashed up at the Medley riot, and it's not insured. So now I'm gonna have to buy a new car."

"Tough," I'm tempted to simply retort, though it may seem harsh. Being honoured to have sacrificed one's vehicle in this inspiring feat of car destruction would have been a more appropriate response.

Of course, such activity is not presently widely popular and the riot provoked an outpouring of fury in the letters column of local papers where the rioters were termed "savage beasts" who needed a "good kick in the ass." Inevitably, one person wanted to "open up boot camps or military camps and imprison these young rebels who lack respect for life in general." The most scathing comment was predictably in the Rantline column: "You're the scabies of the planet with no ideals or morals of your own. Now get your fucking squeegee off my windshield before I cram it up your filthy emaciated ass."

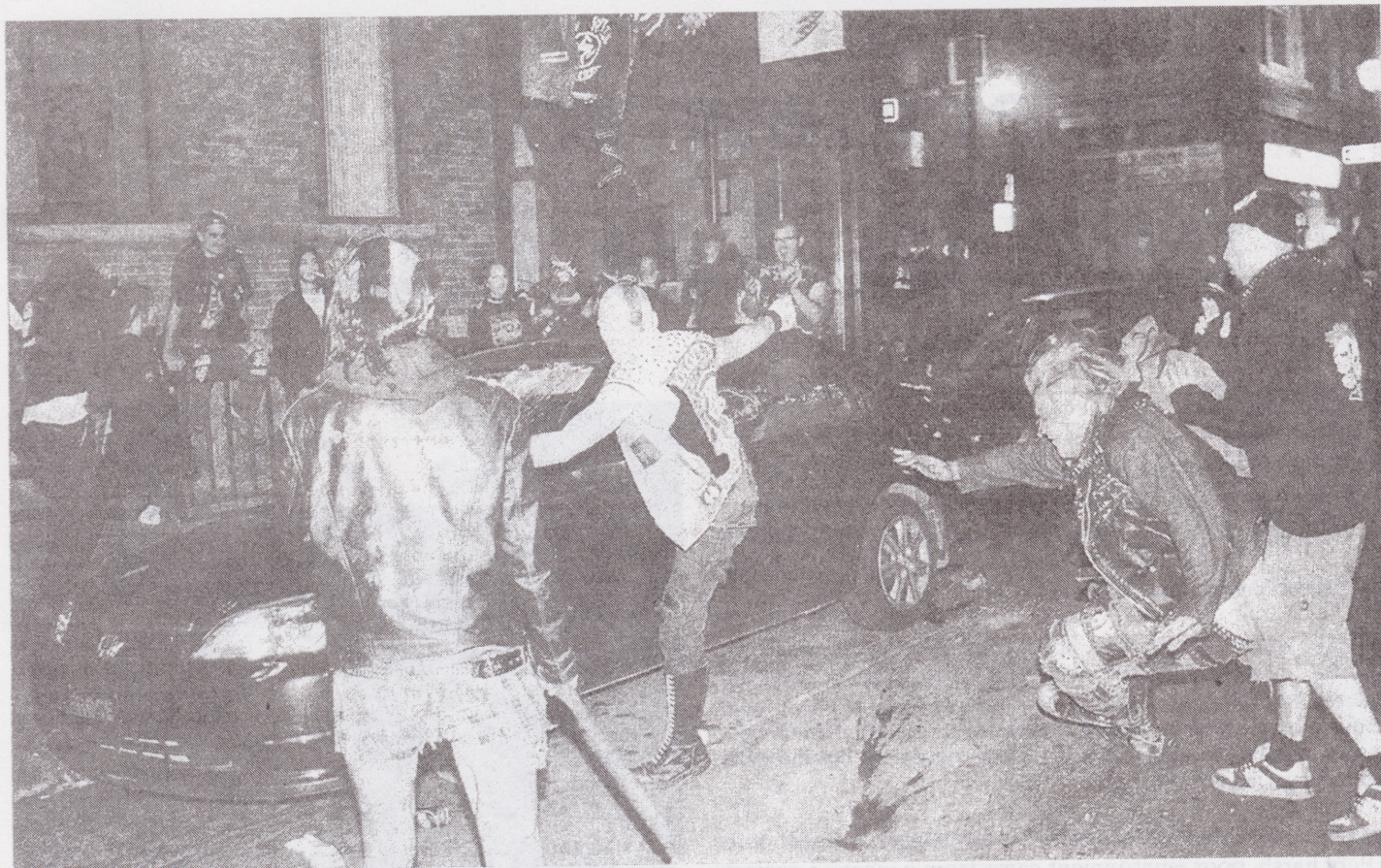
Punk Debates, Chaos Debates

Although comments by punks in public forums were overwhelmingly negative, a couple of voices of support for the event made themselves known in the anonymous Rantline column:

"But to all the kids who keep saying the riot was such an awful thing, well, I've got news for you: punk was never about *nice*. Without condoning violence, I'd just like to say that it was good to see some good old-fashioned destruction every once in a while. And so what if we're further looked down upon by the city and its citizens. Since when do punks want to be loved."

On a political level, what is important here is that actions retain their value despite the fact that they are not widely popular.

The riot provoked a debate about the nature of punk and the place of groups like The Exploited. The punk/hardcore milieu is fractured into various subgroups which often don't mix. Since I'm not a punk I'm not directly concerned by these debates, though I do have a fair collection of punk music. From the outset there has been a connection between punk and anarchism, and the influence of punk extends beyond the anarcho-punk milieu as such and into the broader



anarchist milieu. Many anarchist activists are or have been punks, though this is perhaps less the case today. In the 80s there were numerous excellent political punk/hardcore bands, though much of punk today is pop punk pap. But a tradition remains which is carried on by old-school bands such as The Exploited, one of the original groups.

But with lyrics such as "don't forget the chaos," the band also claims a link to a nebulous entity sometimes known as chaos punk. Here traditional anarchist assurances that anarchism is not chaos go out the window. Some Montreal punks wear the word "chaos" on their clothes. And it was also spray-painted on the wall of a big political squat with people from a variety of subcultures. A number of bands have seen fit to play the chaos card. Apart from the group Total Chaos there are UK Chaos and US Chaos (which on a "Tribute to the Exploited" CD plays the Exploited's "U.S.A.").

In the Rantline column a mini-debate took place on chaos punk. "Chaos *does* rule, it always has and always will. Do you think the punks are scared of the pigs?" one person asked. A woman responded, "This is to the punks. If you really believe that chaos rules, what a sad and disturbing world you live in. My world is a calm and serene one. I surround myself with loving, caring people and I wish I could do the same for you."

"Chaos does not rule," unsurprisingly said

the person whose car had been trashed during the riot. Another person urged chaos punks to "get into your little taxis, and head back to suburbia where you belong."

These snippets shed little light on chaos punk, nor is it clear that any of those participating in the riot were chaos punks. A touch of chaos may well have facilitated the unfolding of the riot, but it wasn't mainly about chaos.

The Exploited and Total Chaos comment on the Riot

The media were quick to buttonhole the bands and solicit comments about the riot. Interviewed in an alternative weekly, Wattie of The Exploited said, "I can understand their anger. I think the kids have been waiting to see us for months. I think back to when I was younger, travelling four or five hours to see a band, and to find at the last minute that they were not coming—I can totally understand. But to smash up property, that's not going to solve anything."

Rob Chaos of Total Chaos, interviewed in the right-wing daily the *National Post*, said, "I don't know why the kids went crazy. I personally wouldn't have done it. I don't believe in that stuff." He added, "People riot to make changes for some reason, and they do somewhat work."

Total Chaos has a song about the subject:

"Riot City"

Riot breaks out every day
from racism to peoples gain
bloody riot to fiery hell
riot's a fact that never fails
riot city - LA
riot city - U.S.A.
riot city - Africa
let's riot let's riot let's riot today
against the police or CIA
riot city - China
riot city - Russia
riot city - Israel
riot city - Germany

The tune was also on Epitaph's annual Punk-O-Rama compilation.

The Exploited, for their part, are described on their record label's website as "riot starting, bouncer bashing, hotel trashing, foul talking, noise calling, venue wrecking, piss taking, unrelenting, punk rocking."

Conclusion

I'll leave it to readers to come to come to their own conclusions about the quotes in the above section.

My personal conclusion concerning the riot is that it was ambiguous and criticizable—but mainly positive.

-Michael William

An interview with Ursula Le Guin

Ursula Le Guin kindly agreed to let us interview her. So the following is a combination of two different e-mail sessions conducted during the hectic end of the year, while she had guests and family visiting.

AJODA: People tend to write about utopias as places where the question of scarcity doesn't exist; where people have everything material that they need. Where do you think you got the idea to write about a utopia where material needs aren't all met? The *Dispossessed* makes the argument that material needs are not the most fundamental aspect of a utopia....

ULG: I think the idea of putting a utopian experiment into a very harsh, poor environment came from a reaction against the confusion of "a good life" with "The Good Life," if that's clear. To a lot of people "utopia" is something like a huge mall, plenty of everything, both necessities and luxuries. To a lot of people in poorer countries, America has always looked something like utopia, right?

But there is a vast difference between "plenty" and "enough." No utopia based on sharing fairly will ever promise more than enough. Excess is a necessity only to capitalism, which is based on perpetual growth and radical inequality of material prosperity.

And also, by putting my anarchist experiment on a planet poor in raw materials, I simplified (as a novelist must simplify) my work of showing how the society worked. When there really is barely enough to go round and everybody has to work for it, keeping things shared out fairly is a lot easier.

AJODA: In another interview (that we found online) this is stated: "LeGuin explains that 'anarchy has historically been identified as female. The domain allotted to women...' 'the family' for example...is the area of order without coercion, rule by custom not force.'" We are hoping you can talk more about what that means, what you think about the idea of anarchy as female, of rule by custom, not force.

ULG: Let's get the spelling right, one place I am not an anarchist is spelling and grammar—it's Le Guin. OK. Well, this is a huge philosophical question and I don't know if I want to tackle it all over again. There is a good deal of solid evidence that the way women run things (in their usually limited sphere of power) is quite different from the way men



Ursula Le Guin photo by Marian Wood Kolisch

run things (usually by first allotting themselves almost all the power). The mere fact that women generally accept the arrangement is significant. Women, as a rule, don't seem to want the kind of power men want so badly. They seem not to care a whole lot who is King and who is Boss and so on, so long as they can run their own life—which necessarily tends to center in the family, which of course in most societies isn't just a couple of people, but a big extended group, a tribe or village. And there, women's preferred mode of keeping order is not by force, but by persuasion, by using rewards and shame—social means rather than brute force. And they tend to seek consensus, instead of wanting to impose their personal will.

They seem to prefer collaboration to hierarchy.

How tied this kind of governance without central authority actually is to gender, I have no idea—I don't think anybody

knows. It may not be feminine at all. It may just be the excessive machismo of our society that sees it as feminine. Consensus governance without a Boss was quite common among Native American peoples. The invading Europeans—all men of course—absolutely failed to understand it; they told the Indians, you guys *must* have a Big Chief; you can't have a society without a Top Man! So the Indians obligingly dragged out some old fellow who was a war chief or a dance leader or had some office, and the Whites made a treaty with him, and then broke it. The status of women varied a lot between Native American peoples; in some societies women had final authority, and named the chiefs; in others—particularly the warlike peoples the Whites admired most—women were treated as serfs and chattel. But even there, social rule was by consensus, not by decree from above. By custom not by force.

AJODA: What is your sense of technology as a force in our lives? good, bad, irrelevant?

ULG: Hey. Technology means using tools. Technology and language are what have made us different from everybody else on earth. Anybody who thinks technology is irrelevant should try eating chicken broth with his fingers.

AJODA: How is the increase in visibility and acceptability of transgendered folks affecting your sense of what is possible/desirable?

ULG: It cheers me up. It makes me think maybe people are not all bigoted idiots using religion to justify hatred and fear. It makes it clear that people can change—slowly, slowly... can learn—slowly, slowly...

AJODA: How does anarchism continue to run through your work in ways that are more subtle? Does it seem like an ongoing theme to you?

ULG: Yes—as it is connected to Taoism, and to a general impulse towards intellectual subversion, anti-authoritarianism, anti-hierarchy and extreme religious heterodoxy.

AJODA: Tantalizing. Could you expand on that?

ULG: No, I really can't at this point. Sorry.

AJODA: What is your current interaction with anarchist ideas? You mention zines and Moe Bowstern—what ideas are you reading or hearing from folks that are exciting, making you think?

ULG: Not a whole lot, frankly. But I am not a political person. My interests are not political really, but social and moral. And the terrible thing that is happening to my country under the Bush administration has limited my attention to trying to find ways and allies to resist the corporate/fundamentalist takeover. Anybody who has a chance of outwitting that gang is the person I'll find exciting.

AJODA: What speculative/science fiction have you read that is similar to (or reminds you of, or takes off from) *The Dispossessed*? Is it frustrating to have people continue to refer to a book that you wrote so long ago? Have you revisited these questions more recently in a way that is more meaningful to you now?

ULG: Well, I talked about planned utopias (such as Anarres) in an essay called "A Non-Euclidean View of California as a Cold Place to Be" which was printed in my book *Dancing at the Edge of the World* in 1989; the paperback was still in print last I looked.

There I proposed (to myself, anyhow) moving on from the blueprint utopia to something wilder—by which I meant my utopian novel *Always Coming Home*, which people fail to recognise as a utopia because it has no political blueprint or affiliation.

They tend to think it's about Indians. I did steal some stuff from various Native American societies, but believe me, the Kesh people of my book aren't Indians, or anybody else we know; I stole from every non-capitalist, more or less consensual society I could find out about. And what's more I took some liberties with what we call "human nature." (That's because I was brought up, as a good anthropologist's daughter, to distrust any talk about or belief in "human nature." Because "human nature" so far always has turned out to be a matter of opinion, not of observation.)

In that book, I was trying to talk about the same dichotomy we brought up a few questions back—the consensus society versus the hierarchical society; rule by custom rather than by decree; passing around of authority according to the occasion, but lack of any permanent authority of any kind; obligation to share wealth instead of expectation of amassing wealth; lack of social class, including the fundamental class/power "division of labor" on gender lines; an ongoing, daily, communal spirituality, instead of a single god, a priestly caste, dogma, "belief,"—etc. etc. I stuck a very macho hierarchic warlike monotheistic society onto the edge of the story to make the contrast plain. But it's a complicated book, and in some ways elusive, because I really wanted not to preach but just to share this vision, which I thought hopeful, beautiful, and entertaining. But it doesn't come on like a utopia. So nobody agrees with me that *Always Coming Home* is actually a much more radical utopian vision than Anarres in *The Dispossessed*.

In any case, it was as far as I could and can go in that direction.

AJODA: What is relevant to you about the gender of your characters, especially Odo and Shevek?

ULG: Well, as I think I tried to explain before, people in a novel are people. They come gendered, the way people generally do—so long as we agree that gender for a great many people is not all of them is largely a social construct, not a physical fate. OK?

Odo was a woman—maybe because that way she could literally embody some of those "feminine" anarchistic qualities we were talking about—maybe because it tickled me to have a woman (instead of some guy with a beard) found a whole social movement and eventually a whole society—Maybe just because she wanted to be a woman. As for Shevek, well, he's a guy, that's who he is, who he wants to be. I like writing guys, and gals, and gays, and hets, and cats, and you name it.

People are weird. That is why we have novelists.

AJODA: If you were writing *The Dispossessed* now, what would be different? How have your ideas about anarchy changed?

ULG: My ideas haven't changed much, but I have, so I couldn't be writing that book now—I'm not that person any more. A novel is not just ideas. It involves the body as much as the mind, maybe more. Ideas are nice and stable and solid and durable. Bodies aren't. Bodies are very anarchic and unreliable and, well, alive.

Until they die and become ideas. I intend to remain body as long as feasible.

These questions were composed by Lawrence Jarach, Leona Benteen and L.D. Hobson.

Anarchist Identity in the 21st Century?

Have we found a voice for an anarchist identity? If we have, to what extent will it coincide with the now "old time religion" of the New Left and how will it be very different? Is it even possible to talk about a politic of identification without sacrificing the anarchist principles of autonomy and freedom of association?

These questions are the concern of the following essays. There is not an unanimity in the responses here beyond a rejection of the singular solutions offered by the specialists in identity. Anarchists are just beginning to approach identity politics in a critical way. Up till now much of the anarchist articulation of these themes has looked like an embarrassing parroting of the exact same phrases and intentions coming out of the worst of the New Left. This has ranged from anarchist support of Direct Action's firebombing of pornography shops to anarchist calls for an "anti-oppression analysis (as) key to leadership development."

Instead we offer that an anarchist identity would challenge the mythology of the Civil Rights Movement. It would reject the essentialism of biological determinism and cultural predestination. It would articulate identity as the tension of personal discovery at the price of social exclusion and connection. It would place identity in relation to our struggle against the State and Capital and not as opposed to it.

-Aragorn!



"Direct Action" by Eric Drooker

Was there anarchy in Detroit?

An APOC reflection

by Two members of RACE

There has been a long-standing critique of the anarchist movement from its contemporary non-white participants that it follows a Eurocentric tradition and in practice does not address the issues that affect non-white anarchists and their communities. In addition it has been said that the anarchist movement is racist, lacking in people of color, and insensitive to the issue of race. It is argued that voices belonging to people of color and their allies are dismissed or ignored altogether. Articles like, "Where Was the Color In Seattle" and publications like *Race Traitor*, have attempted to bring these issues to the forefront, and have been met with cries of apologetic white guilt and defensive barbs of the "we are doing the best we can" nature.

Regardless of the relevance of any of these criticisms they are a small part of what set the stage to make the first Anarchist People of Color Conference (APOC) a reality. A conference of this nature has been the dream and vision of some of the old school figureheads of the movement for over fifteen years. The weekend of meetings held at Wayne State University, Detroit, in October of last year were an exciting end to over a year of hard work, fund raising, logistics and organizing on the part of many, many people.

The announcement of the conference was followed by a great deal of Internet activity. The conference website, the APOC email list and a separate list for conference organizers are just a few of the many virtual places that planning, information, exchange, debate and unfortunately, scandal, took place. Like every good conference there was a plan for workshops, a caucus or two and the inevitable social time. Proposals were tossed around with the hope of achieving consensus by the end of the weekend. Warnings were posted about dangerous, racist, ill-intended individuals whose sole reason to exist was to put us all in harm's way and destroy

our efforts. Plus there was the added bonus of years of personal and political friction between conference organizers being aired in public and not so public, but equally accessible, forums. As ridiculous as it all was it didn't matter. This event, bringing so many non-white anarchists together, was a phenomenon indeed. None of this was going to keep the majority of people from coming.

The Black Autonomy Network of Community Organizers (BANCO) sent out the initial call for a non-white anarchist conference and in its draft proposal (titled "Building an Anarchist United Front") stated, "The main business of this conference should be about movement building...It [Anarchism] cannot remain what it presently is: an abstract political ideology for middle class white people." Ernesto Aguilar, who has gained a level of notoriety for organizing the APOC list, also put forth a proposal prior to the event that declared, "Many movements are crippled by Eurocentric, middle class and privileged orientations...We acknowledge the need to organize independently as a movement uniting people of color." Non-white anarchists interested in creating new, more relevant approaches to asking and answering questions centered on power, the state, and racism were encouraged to participate in and embrace this "truly historic occasion." While a large percentage of conference attendees came with a specific agenda it is also true that many people were simply there to meet other non-white anarchists. The original intention was that these proposals were to be discussed over the weekend in a plenary session, for the sole purpose of reaching consensus upon one of them. Here begins our drama.

A week before the conference, BANCO posted a statement on the internet titled "Stop Character Assassination and Sectarianism in the Anarchist People of Color Movement" in response to a critique made by Ernesto, and others, that

Lorenzo had been making decisions about the conference without gaining the approval of members of the conference list serve. It also addressed Ernesto's request that both the BANCO proposal and the network proposal be discussed in workshops rather than a plenary session since less than a dozen people who pre-registered for the conference expressed interest in building an APOC organization. BANCO accused Ernesto of "sabotaging the conference because of his political differences with Lorenzo," and having a "sectarian agenda." Ernesto responded by saying that BANCO was "exerting benevolent authoritarianism," as a way to gain influence and power. Ernesto challenged BANCO's name calling and attributed it to its (Lorenzo's) inability to deal with disagreements in a productive manner.

The day before the conference BANCO posted a final response to the pandemonium and declared that "Trotskyist and Maoist cults, cloaked in Anarchist colors," had taken over the conference and no member of BANCO would attend. It seems ironic and unfortunately all-too-common that the focus of so much conflict before the conference was rooted in semantic differences between two perspectives historically birthed from the same tradition. A European tradition that sees bigger as better, and values quantity (*i.e.* the number of members) over quality (*i.e.* the nature of the relationships between those members.)

The rest of the APOC conference consisted of over twenty workshops representing the perceived "prerequisites" of single-issue politics. Heather Ajani, a member of Bring the Ruckus, opened up a discussion in her workshop, "Women of Color and Feminism," that centered on non-white women's relationship to traditional feminism. Gregory Lewis, a Karate instructor who has taught self-defense seminars for Anti-Racist Action, gave an interactive presentation relating to the techniques, concepts, and applications of unarmed self-defense. There was a screening of the film *Afro-punk: The rock n roll nigger experience*, directed by James Spooner, who was also present at the conference to answer questions about the documentary. In his workshop, "From Compounds to Congress: White Nationalism in the U.S.," Eric Ward—editor of three books about white supremacy—gave his views on how anti-authoritarians can build frameworks of response to the white nationalist movement. There were multitudes of workshops that dealt with addressing police repression including "Organizing Against Police repression—The Police and Cruising" by Gabriel Morales, "We Got the Camera: Building Local Copwatch Groups" by Heather Ajani, "Community Alternatives to the NYPD" by Rafael Mutis, and "The Drug War: An Anarchist of Color Response" by Roger White. "Herbs, People's Medicine" by Kwah Waadabi explored ways of taking health care into your own hands. The workshop "Anarchists in the Palestinian Movement" presented by the Student Movement for Justice, opened up a discussion about anarchists and nationalist struggles. "An

Introduction and Application to Critical Race Theory for Anarchists" is the title of the workshop RACE presented, which examined the primary concepts of Critical Race Theory and discussed how the ideas and language it creates could help inspire anarchists to move away from adopting the traditional reformist 'rights'-based perspective on issues of race and racism.

Our story

After three months of fund raising through bake sales at various anarchist events, Long Haul Infoshop movie nights and even the occasional gross but lucrative liberal function, enough funds were accumulated to justify the already too much money spent on plane tickets, car rental and seedy motel room. It was time to face the hard truth; we were going to Detroit.

We have all had the experience of standing against the wall at anarchist events thinking "Damn that's a lot of white people." So the official announcement of the APOC conference was an exciting one. It was the chance to spend a weekend

We have all had the experience of standing against the wall at anarchist events thinking "Damn that's a lot of white people." So the official announcement of the APOC conference was an exciting one. It was the chance to spend a weekend with people who share so many of the same experiences and frustrations,...or to just have that feeling of being a little less an outsider for a few days.

with people who share so many of the same experiences and frustrations, to meet more than just one or two non-white people who share your political outlook, to work with a group of people who want to take the anarchist community in a different, more relevant, direction than the predominantly white movement seems to be going or to just have that feeling of being a little less an outsider for a few days. All this meant we had to go, we absolutely had to be there. Unfortunately as the time to depart got closer our spirits were falling and we were questioning our zeal. Nothing in the rhetoric, planning, or behavior of those involved in the conference demonstrated to us that it was going to be anything different than any previous anarchist conference. It seemed like this conference was to follow the form that had already been established.

Calls for unity are never very exciting or interesting; they suggest that it is relevant for people to set aside their differences for the sake of building a supposedly new and potentially influential movement founded upon some generic principle or characteristic we all have in common. We were hesitant to respond to these proposals because they all argued for a cohesive network to be created after one weekend of interaction. The idea of this seemed, at best, forced.

In the name of thrift we flew to Chicago and drove to Detroit. It was a long day so we showed up at the conference Friday evening just long enough to register and get schedules. The general feeling in the air was one of excitement and there was no talk at all of the scandal that had immediately proceeded the event. We even approached one of those involved to see how he was holding up and his response was that it wasn't important and he didn't want to talk about it.

Saturday morning was originally when the general plenary

had been scheduled. Since one of the two original proposals was no longer on the table and the other was being introduced in its own workshop, it was decided that time would be used for a general “meet and greet.” We went around the room, with people introducing themselves and touting their activist credentials. There were people from all over the country and a couple from South America, and several from various parts of Asia. New York seemed to be represented the strongest as there were a couple vanloads of people who came from New York. While there was a mix of both young and old, it was a little disappointing to see that BANCO not showing up meant that there weren’t very many older anarchists there. The general attitude in the non-white community of respect for one’s elders embodies something that the white anarchist community is often lacking. Many anarchists that have been in the fight for decades are first-hand witnesses of what it looks like when the state turns on its own. The perspective, context and insight they can offer is important to the younger members of the community. To have these voices present at an event like this, in a forum where their words would have boomed, would have brought a history and context we don’t normally get access to.

The rest of Saturday was devoted to workshops. We were really hoping that the workshops would be uncharacteristic of the typical; unfortunately, they were the same mundane and uninteresting workshops that occur at every anarchist conference. Most didn’t even go so far as to attempt to inspire an anarchist take that was out of the ordinary or separate from non-anarchist movement politics and rhetoric. Many of the responses people gave in the workshops were concerned with making proposals and voting on them. In the Palestinian Solidarity workshop for instance, instead of really answering and discussing the question “What does it mean for anarchists to be building solidarity with Nationalist movements/struggles,” three proposals were made:

1. Create a platform that addresses issues of colonialism,
2. Go back to your respective states and organize local marches and international boycotts of the military, and
3. Create a network so that information sharing can take place among people of color.

These proposals were debated back and forth until the facilitator and the instigators of the proposals concluded that the best way to deal with the situation would be to take a vote. Some people resisted the idea that voting on proposals should be the natural progression of a one-hour conversation. When those people challenged the group they were met with trite comments at best, and complete disregard at worst. The workshop on white nationalism was intelligently thought out and abundantly fact-filled but at the same time inspired nothing more than melancholy as it was stylistically similar to the dull and droning lectures of those of an academic professor. The point of workshops is to learn something, not

sit in class. The highlights were definitely the karate workshop taught by Gregory Lewis of Seattle and the screening of “Afro-punk: The ‘rock-n-roll nigger experience.” If you have not seen this film yet, go now! James Spooner puts together an amazing historical and personal tale that anyone will relate to who has ever stood on the sidelines and felt like they didn’t belong. Aside from these shining stars the presentation aspect of the conference was on par with take your pick of any multi-day anarchist info-event.

What was disappointing about this for us was that we came to this event looking for a very different politic than normally delivered by the anarchist status-quo. We were interested in challenging the state of APOC politics. Our biggest question was, “Is the adopting of civil rights rhetoric the only way non-white people can understand themselves and their politics?”

color?”

Rights-based politics is mired in the tradition of thinking about the state and its policies, rules, and institutions as things to be changed—as opposed to being eradicated. Simply put, this ideology seeks to reform something that anarchists seek to destroy. All weekend long we were surrounded by discussions of how to find equality and get more assistance from the state to those in need, or how to get the evil politicians to right their wrongs and keep their promises.

Discussion is sorely needed on how to bring communities of color together, rid them of dependence upon the state, and stop waiting on the charity of the political machine to do what’s right.

In its wake the event spawned some minor internet scuffles that mostly resulted in non-constructive and attack-like criticism of people’s workshops and behaviors. There was an organized “POC block” at the FTAA protests in Miami, a new network for activists was created to focus on prison solidarity for non-white people, and there will be an APOC art tour this summer. It also generated the incentive for several regional APOC events, one of which has already taken place in DC, with others to come in Philadelphia, Houston and the Bay Area, all later this year. It isn’t that any of these are bad things. It’s just that they are predictable. Is this any different than the work that was going on before? Are we having new and interesting conversations that we never could before? Hopefully the regional conferences, being smaller and on a more personal scale, will help take the dialogue in this direction. Perhaps, if we can combine this discussion with the fulfilling sense one gets after hanging out with so many non-white people for a few days, we can come up with relevant anarchist politics that reflect the diversity of cultures that we live with in the world.

On the Road with CWS

Dot Matrix

This article is a critique. Criticism is a topic and a practice that requires a lot more thought and concern than it generally gets.

All activists, organizers, all people who are interested in social change, we are all critics. Leftism is a tendency of a particular kind of criticism, with a history of a particular kind of action and analysis.

Criticism usually isn't done well. It is easier to say that something is wrong than to say how to do something right. Usually criticism is an exercise in pointing fingers—you're not doing this right, what is wrong with you for not knowing how to do it better, I would never do it that way—that is more about shaming than it is about really trying to figure out how to do something better, or how to help other people do something better. Two helpful changes could happen regarding critics of social-change tendencies. One is that people who are being critical be concrete and specific about what concerns they have, which actual practices they find problematic. The other is that people who are being critiqued become more able to hear the possibilities in critiques, which are always difficult to receive and even more so when any of the parties are defensive.

The question of criticism points both ways. I am critiquing CWS (Challenging White Supremacy workshops), which is critiquing lots of other people. I want to learn how to criticize better. I hope that CWS organizers want to learn that also.

I am trusting that the line on their website, "Constructive criticism is an act of love," is something that we can all take to heart.

Challenging White Supremacy (CWS) workshops are San Francisco based trainings aimed primarily at teaching white people about racism and about how to be responsible anti-racist activists and organizers. The workshops follow a curriculum—including readings on people-of-color groups, U.S. colonial and neo-colonial history and current events, and resistance to U.S. oppression. The CWS project has in the past couple of years been somewhat collectivized by a group of CWS graduates. CWS workshops explicitly stress taking action—not just understanding the issue as CWS defines it but acting on that understanding, connecting theory and action. CWS is the most consistent and reliable organization in the Bay Area for white people who want to do anti-racist and anti-racism work.

White supremacy is one of the defining characteristics of oppression in the U.S. Growing up in a culture that privileges people who are perceived as white makes it impossible not to be racist. People who benefit from white racism have a particular responsibility to figure out how to challenge white racism. For people creating change in this society, it is essential to understand how white racism has developed in this country, how cultural minority folks have been oppressed (killed, tortured, disappeared) in ways that are different from

cultural majority folks. It would be wonderful if a series of workshops could get together a bunch of strangers to do some readings and have some discussions to work through the defensiveness and ignorance that especially white people in the U.S. feel around race. These workshops would appropriately include the outrage of people who have been brutalized by white supremacy. As a long time anti-racist activist and organizer who went through a CWS training many years ago and a refresher a couple years ago (and as someone who has worked with many CWS graduates over the years) I will go that far down the CWS road. What follows are the impassable detours, overpasses and tunnels—as in vision.

U.S. theories around race tend towards over-simplicity, and CWS theory is no exception. For example, much in the way that it is a blindness to talk about Native people, or Asian people, or African people, because those terms assume a similarity that is usually inaccurate, so it is inaccurate to use the term People of Color. Not only are "Peoples of Color" not like each other in significant ways, they are not targeted by white supremacy in the same ways. There is no word or phrase (at least in English) that acknowledges both the similarities and the differences between groups of people (much less individuals) who are oppressed in this culture around skin color, gender, body



type, cultural background, language, religion, class; all of which are related to perceptions of "race." The existing terms (that we use for lack of better ones) emphasize what the racist system wants emphasized, which is the presumed "special" character of whiteness. Similarly, there is no sophisticated understanding in the left about how various cultures interact with each other. "Internalized racism" is the phrase usually forced to cover the different problematic events in the U.S. between individuals and groups not clearly classifiable as "white."

While all of us have to use the language that enables us to be at least approximately understood, CWS rides these simplifications rather than critiquing, exploring, or deconstructing

them. This is unfortunate in a group that is celebrated as being "cutting edge" on the issue of racism.

CWS is part of the left¹ but CWS theory is simplistic even by left standards. Despite the inclusion of the words "class," "homophobia" and "patriarchy" on the CWS website, the CWS workshops don't have a class or queer or feminist analysis, much less one that attempts to integrate those. "Challenging White Supremacy workshop organizers believe that the most effective way to create fundamental social change in the U.S. is by building mass-based, multi-racial grassroots movements led by radical activists of color."² As part of the collectivization process, CWS is beginning to address this lack—it very recently held its first

workshop on gender—but CWS was started and is promoted and successful as a group that does not work on the connections between issues. When I was in my first CWS workshop years ago, the attempt to integrate other analyses was seen as racist, as disregarding the primacy of racism, as a distraction from our complicity in the racist system.

The principles that CWS holds for creating an "anti-racist agenda" are:

- 1) Act on your principles;
- 2) Create a culture of resistance;
- 3) Stand in solidarity;
- 4) Prioritize the issues of people of color;
- 5) Respect the leadership of people of color;
- 6) Hold on to your visions.

While the first and last of these refer people back to their own perspectives and their own lives, the entire workshop is based on challenging white people's understandings of their own lives and perspectives. While white CWS participants may be fed the line that they know what's right and have appropriate visions, much more emphasis is put on telling them that their whole lives they have benefitted from oppressive systems and that their perceptions are based on these benefits, and most significantly that CWS will show them how to behave. How then are they supposed to trust their perceptions enough to base future actions on them? CWS may intend to empower people to act ethically in the situations that they find themselves in, but it actually acts as a promoter of rules. The problem with rules is that people follow them rather than thinking for themselves, and once they get into a situation where the rules don't work, they're lost. For example, given two political groups of color with conflicting goals and/or tactics, what is the good CWS graduate to do? How does she decide which is best? If she decides based on her own understanding, how does she know that she isn't really basing her decision on what is most comfortable for her as a white person? Another example: Is a light-skinned or mixed-race person's understanding of racism less valid than the understanding of someone with darker skin?

Arguably the biggest problem with CWS is the least quantifiable and has to do with an attitude that I can best describe as moralistic. I have felt this sense of moral superiority by CWS folks, and, unsolicited, other people have talked to me about feeling it also; an attitude from CWS participants that their work is more important than other (white) people's work, that if you're not working in a project that conforms to CWS standards then you are part of The Problem, that CWS participants are the only (white) people who are really working on their own racism (even more true for CWS trainers). CWS workshops do not encourage people to talk about the mixed feelings and controversial beliefs they have; these workshops encourage people to accept, incorporate and proselytize the CWS agenda. In the CWS refresher that I took, the CWS folks gave out a

series of definitions that were the ones we were to use, the definitions that were "right" regardless of how useful they were in discussing these topics with other people or in understanding the topics for ourselves. When we struggle with the basic oppressions in our culture, there is a difficult and necessary balance between consciousness raising (which can become insular and introspective to a fault) and following experts (facilitators who bestow "the answers" upon the participants).

Working with people who have gone through CWS usually means listening to a lot of righteous talking and not a lot of concrete suggestions.

In my history of different organizing efforts (working in coalition on long term projects and one-time events of various sorts as well as while creating long-standing groups) there have been two directions of thought regarding how to organize in an anti-racist way. The first direction is that people of color and white people should all be working together. The second way, promoted in the sixties, is that white people should be organizing and educating themselves and their own communities (presumably of mostly white people) and people of color should be doing the same—and should not be forced to deal with the ignorance and bigotry of white people—however well-intentioned. In the past 10 or 15 years, the integration argument has become more popular again, with the added condition of making sure that people of color are in positions of leadership and are not tokenized. There are both good and bad things about both routes, making it impossible to have clarity about which is best in a given situation without conversations that include some amount of trust that everyone in the room is actually interested in finding the best solution. CWS graduates have learned to trust other CWS graduates (due to the bonds that are formed by spending time talking about controversial issues), and have learned to be suspicious of white people who are not CWS graduates (due in part to learning a specific terminology and way of thinking about the issue—not necessarily shared by non-graduates), which makes that trust more difficult.

"Anti-racist education should be required and permanent for all white folks who call themselves 'social justice

activists.'" Of course all people who desire fundamental social change should continually be learning and checking ourselves and our colleagues around issues of practice and theory, and this should be happening around all of the different ways that people are privileged or un-privileged. But the language of "education," and more importantly how CWS practices this "education," is as experts, as authorities, as those-who-know and who will show everyone else The Way. Obviously some people do know more than other people; I am not denying that training and experience are important. The hard-to-quantify point I am making is that it is one thing to explore with people places that you have been to before, it is another to deliver them to the chosen location. To be fair to CWS, "race" is such a loaded concept—especially in political circles—that white people tend to come to anti-racist education projects with the desire to be delivered.

By refusing to acknowledge the complexities around power and around how people learn to survive within oppressive societies, CWS acts to objectify the people it is trying to respect. By making skin color the most important thing about a person, and making simplistic assumptions about how people exist in a state of not-whiteness, CWS reifies race.

People learn how to make the best of completely fucked-up situations. Some people of color have learned to use racism in the same way that some women have learned to use sexism (and so on). One obvious example of someone using this kind of manipulation is Clarence Thomas, the very conservative, then-candidate for the Supreme Court who was accused by his black staff member (Anita Hill) of sexual assault. Thomas referred to the hugely publicized review of his actions by an all-white, all-male panel as a "high tech lynching." And of course, now he is a Supreme Court justice. His use of his race was conscious and entirely strategic.

Abiding by CWS theory makes it impossible for any pale skinned person (regardless of ethnicity, etc.) to challenge any dark skinned person around racism, or frequently around anything else (sexism, classism, etc.). This assumption of ultimate authority based on

skin color acts to further distance people from each other, making it more difficult—rather than less—to build the kind of relationships with each other that more deeply and consistently challenge racist assumptions and acceptance of privilege. “If the core group is predominantly white, it should work to develop relationships of strategic collaborations or alliances with organizers of color. *Ideally*, these organizers of color would have a strong interest in seeing that the constituency being organized by the anti-racist core group creates a consistent, long term anti-racist agenda.” [Italics added] Presumably if white or mostly white groups cannot find people of color to lend credibility to a project, then the project shouldn’t happen. This encourages a kind of tokenism that is the last thing that anti-racist people actually want. It is true that white people have a lot to learn about racism that they can’t learn from each other. It is true that society is segregated so that building working political relationships, or making friends, with people who are different from us (in various ways) takes some conscious thought and action. But arguably it is more anti-racist to take a class, or go to lunch with a co-worker, than to search out an activist of color or two to lend “face” to a political project.

Some of people’s embrace of the CWS project is due to a lack of other options. Conscious white people want to be anti-racist, although frequently the sincere desire to learn more appropriate ways of understanding others and ourselves is subsumed by guilt or the fear of being bad or wrong or attackable. This makes the quest more about getting approval than about having real relationships and actually challenging anything. A revealing comment by the founder: “When I challenge white supremacy, both my own white privilege and the oppression of people of color, I am healing myself—of my fears, of self-doubt, of *the guilt that comes from being who I am*: a white person of conscience in a white supremacist society.” [Italics added] This endearingly vulnerable statement is a celebration of her guilt; she sees guilt as a sign of her conscience rather than as a sign of her misguided identification with corporate media, the military, the government, big

business—the institutions that do the vast majority of actually enforcing white supremacy. (Although obviously individuals do also enforce white skin privilege, the impact is qualitatively different.) Her statement is an example of a significant failure in the culture and theory of CWS; the culture and theory

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that encourage white participants to both self-aggrandize (by acting like they have more influence in the society than they do) and to martyr themselves.

Vine DeLoria Jr. in his book, *Custer Died for Your Sins*, talks about workshop Indians and workshop anthropologists in a chapter that reminded me intriguingly of CWS (and other challenging racism workshops I have taken). The strongest thing I got from this essay is the reminder that we are in the world. None of us is an abstraction; all of us are working on and creating and changing from and dealing with all the ways that we are oppressed and oppressive. Workshop anthros create workshop Indians, who create workshop anthros who create. Another way of putting this is that there is no way to come at the issue of racism, of power, without affecting it. That I can even write that sentence—where the language implies that possibility—is a problem. I have heard people say things like this for years, and I have said it myself in various ways, and it is a fucking hard epiphany to hold onto. Epiphanies are not for holding onto, I suppose. I suggest you read the book. Or find your own inspiring books to read.

What are some other options? Getting together in small groups of friends and talking about issues and experiences with people you know and trust,

and who you trust to challenge each other conscientiously. Using the challenges and insight from those groups in the work you do in the world. Making friends with and listening to people whose experiences are different from yours (if they’re interested, obviously) but without making them Experts. Going outside of activist circles to find inspiration and critique. Interestingly, after I finished most of this article I was introduced to a body of thought called Critical Race Theory (developed mostly by lawyers who are critical of the law) that raises many of the complexities around race that CWS doesn’t. These theorists are thinking about race in sophisticated ways that address people’s experiences and they are specifically confronting liberal thought about, for example, the law’s neutrality, race as a social construct, the significance of storytelling, racism as aberration vs.

racism as business-as-usual, etc. They are also explicitly interested in taking action, even if the action they’re considering tends to be reformist rather than re-structural. (I recommend *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, by Jean Stefancic and Richard Delgado.)

These are changes that CWS could incorporate. Unfortunately, right now CWS exists more as a stamp of leftist approval on a white person’s activism, to show that s/he is taking racism seriously, than it does to challenge the foundational concepts or relationships of racism.

Notes

1. For a critique of the left from one anarchist’s perspective go to:

<http://pub47.ezboard.com/fanarchykkafrm1.showMessage?topicID=325.topic>

An excerpt: “For the left, the social struggle against exploitation and oppression is essentially a political program to be realized by whatever means are expedient. Such a conception obviously requires a political methodology of struggle, and such a methodology is bound to contradict some basic anarchist principles. First of all, politics as a distinct category of social existence is the separation of the decisions that determine our lives from the execution of those decisions. This separation resides in institutions that make and impose those decisions. It matters little how democratic or consensual those institutions are; the separation and institutionalization inherent in politics always constitute an imposition simply because they require that decisions be made before the circumstances to which they apply arise.”

2. All quotes are from the CWS web site.

Representation as Salvation

Christina Heatherton

"Culture underwrites power even as power elaborates culture."
-Edward Said

"Multiculturalism [together with other emergent studies] is a phenomenon with a silent partnership; the broad and radical change now taking place within world capitalism."
-Masao Miyoshi

"I think this fits perfectly the existing capitalist order, that there is nothing subversive in it. I think this fits perfectly today's ideology of victimization where in order to legitimize, to gain power politically, you must present yourself, somehow, as the victim."

-Slavoj Zizek

The famous morphing sequence from Michael Jackson's "Black or White" video features a continual stream of beautiful multi-cultural smiling faces, one morphing into the next: a samurai becomes a thin black woman becomes a red-haired man, etc. Each smiling face becomes a point of entry. The faces unconditionally accept you, the viewer, and in turn, separately but continuously ask for your colorblind acceptance of them. This symbolic celebration of diversity from the mid-1990s continues to represent the problems of identity politics.

When diversity is placed on a continuum, to be celebrated as an entity, with equal respect to each individual component part, the groups contained are condensed into respective homogenous identities. As the video demonstrates, there needs to be extreme differences between the identities on the continuum for more dramatic morphing. Differences are therefore emphasized rather than similarities. The extensive array of differences that results can be thought of as a palette. Each unique group is given its own space as it is displayed, ordered, and selectively drawn from by dominant desires.

Identity politics is often premised on the reclamation of authentic cultural identity from dominant scripts. The palette

of celebratory multiculturalism is often in line with these interests as it also seeks unique and varying hues. This convergence can create willingness in under-represented groups to play into multicultural fantasies. As the use of this concept in the music video shows, there can be a nearly imperceptible transition from the process of identity reclamation to commodified identity formation.

In the last decade of her life, June Jordan saw her poetry class, Poetry for the People, become a national movement. The course which promised the "political and artistic empowerment of students...motivated by the moral wish to mitigate the invisibility and the imposed silence of those less privileged than we" found followers in churches, high schools, colleges, prisons, and communities around the country.

My first roommate in college couldn't convince me that the class was worth my time. Finding my authentic voice through poetry sounded like something I'd do on acid, on a mountain, in Santa Cruz. When I went to the Poetry for the People final reading that year that, I discovered I could actually be moved by student poetry. In a marathon reading to a large and cheering crowd, students told stories in small snapshots of their lives; a daughter harvesting silver threads from her mother's resting head, roots battling concrete in small uprisings between sidewalk cracks, the prom queen strung out and shivering on a lonely beach, a student contemplating who 'the people' were over a bowl of cheerios. I was inspired to capture meaning in my life with similar skill.

June Jordan died in June 2002, soon after that event. By that time, my roommate had graduated and moved out of state. She asked if I would take her ticket and attend the memorial service. It was at the service that I learned about June Jordan's legacy and decided I had to take the class that she had started.

Celebrities like Angela Davis, Danny Glover, and Alice Walker testified to the passion June brought to her lifework. She is recognized internationally as a critical activist, teacher, poet, and as the most published African American author in history. Between the testimonials at the service, there were film clips of June, shutting down William F. Buckley on his show, speaking at rallies, teaching, and delivering her mighty, mighty poetry.

She was lithe, graceful, and angry as hell on screen. I think it was her anger that impressed me most. Her poetry conveyed the injustices that infected the smallest facets of her life: like having to change her clothes, shoes, and posture before walking out at night. Unlike most arguments that I had read, heard, or made myself, there was something inspiring in the way June could articulate her anger while successfully demanding the attention of anyone who heard it:

I am not wrong: Wrong is not my name
My name is my own my own my own
and I can't tell you who the hell set things up like this
but I can tell you that from now on my resistance
my simple and daily and nightly self-determination
may very well cost you your life.
-from "Poem About My Rights"

After her death, the class was renamed "*June Jordan's Poetry for the People*" and was fully run by one of her former students. As is the case with sequels and projects of remembrance that have to shuffle under the name of a past success, the class became a mediocre imitation of its inspiring predecessor.

I took the first part of the class, which involved writing, reading poetry, and listening to lectures about underrepresented cultural poetic traditions. Since I thought more nuanced issues of identity, especially those involving class, were getting shafted in lectures and discussion, I was encouraged to apply for the second part of the class. There, I participated in the program to become one of the thirty student teachers for the following semester's class. Instead of the *as advertised* debate and discussion about the concepts of identity that we all brought to the class, we were taught to reproduce some stagnant essentialisms that most fifth grade classes would identify as racist.

In the middle of the semester we had an in-class exercise to determine the "Emotional Palette" of each American cultural poetic tradition we had been covering in class. In this brainstorming, we determined that African-American poetry was "musical" "had good rhythm" and was "full of resistance," that Asian-American poetry possessed a "strong yet gentle grace" and that the emotional palette of Arab-American poetry could be described as "yearning for a homeland."

As a Japanese American woman, I was furious. We had completely generalized the Asian American "emotional palette" and neglected to mention that Asians were all good at math and playing piano.

When we were through with the exercise, I asked how generalizing multiple variations of region, class, gender, religion, sexuality, experience and multiplication abilities into homogeneous categories helped us understand the cultures we were studying. In our willingness to reproduce some limited representations, the exercise only seemed to reveal our ignorance about those cultures. I asked whether the popularity of the authors we had read might have initially been determined by their abilities to fit into similar commercially viable "emotional" cultural categories.

After class, I got my answers from the teacher.
Answer #1: "You are challenging the very structure of this class. I am not going to make space for that here."
#2: "If you are not interested in celebrating the unique and individual beauty of these different cultures then maybe you

can start your own class."

#3: "There are certain principles that you have to adhere to if you are going to be in this class. If you can't do that then maybe you shouldn't be taking it."

For all its claims at being a revolutionary practice, identity politics can mimic the authoritarian models it postures itself as resisting. In this case, the teacher made evident that he was not interested in problematizing the class' concepts of identity. He also made it clear that if I was not interested in accepting these concepts then I should not be in the class.

This pressure to assimilate has a broader corollary. Essential to a liberal political organizing model (which also infiltrates the consensus model) is an emphasis on assimilation in order to create individuals of similar interests and political desires. In assimilation at both scales, there is a silencing of interests that may link themselves to a broader structural analysis. In the class, the politics of the organizing model carried over into the politics of the class. By enforcing fixed identities that dismiss critique, the political goals were limited to the mere pursuit of cultural recognition from the mainstream.

As the semester wore on, I wanted to leave the class. Soon I started to hate writing poetry. Where before I was attempting to write telling snapshots, now I wrote poems about Gov. Schwarzenegger that started "You are great und powerful man...." I thought it was because I resented the teacher. I decided that I just resented his project.

Writing poetry for a program with a skewed identity politics agenda made me an unwitting proponent of the emotional cultural palette. I didn't agree with the program's politics and didn't want to support them. I never believed my expression was denied because I never believed that it was a right that someone else had to grant me. Even so, every poem I wrote about being angry affirmed my oppressed and silenced background. The very act of my writing sustained the argument that my expression had been denied. There was no way I could participate without inscribing my own 'culture' and oppression and upholding the politics of the class.

The class was and is guided by a belief in representation as salvation. Once underrepresented groups are more fully represented, the logic goes, there will be more recognition and less injustice against them. Under this belief, the stories of subjugation and hardship need to be produced as evidence for that nebulous wider audience that regulates the dispensing of injustice. This is the incentive for producing the excessive narratives of pain and suffering, that conservatives call whining and make liberals feel guilty. This reformist politic denies any complex critical dialogue about identity formation. It accepts that authenticity is produced by its "true" lived experience unconnected to theory, politics, or embedded power relations.

I don't doubt that the ability of marginalized groups to gain some political, material or representational gains often depends on their ability to deploy their "identities" in strategic performances of collective desire. However, such performances always play into existing forms of marginalization and subordination. My experience with Poetry for the People demonstrated an unsophisticated use of this tactic. Marginalization was uncritically celebrated and the identities performed were internalized.

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For an Ongoing Theory of Domestic Violence

Dot Matrix

Labels are simplistic: they help us to move quickly in the world, to make snap judgments (sometimes to be funny), but don't allow for the full complexity of every individual and every situation. Sometimes that's not a big deal. Sometimes we don't care very much that we don't know or understand or acknowledge the full complexity of a person or an event or an interaction. But frequently, we don't even acknowledge to ourselves that we are choosing to simplify things; frequently we believe that things really are simple, and that people really can be summed up in a couple of words like "victim/survivor," "abuser," "rapist," etc. When that happens, when we ignore that people are complex and have multi-layered—and frequently conflicting—ways of dealing with power in relationships, then we don't interact with the attention that serves us best.

There are two things I am addressing in this essay. One is the need for a model for domestic violence that builds on the feminist analysis from the '80s; the other is the need for effective community responses to violence within the community—that is, what do you do when one friend accuses another of abusing him? I want to suggest a new way of thinking about these issues, or at least to introduce some terminology to make talking about them more useful. My use of the words "accused" and "accuser" is not to imply that maybe nothing happened—and definitely not

to refer to a legal or criminal process—but to acknowledge that often an accusation is where we have to begin the process. The reader will also have to forgive the overwhelming number of word compounds. I am working with inadequate language, and I am going to make sure we all suffer for it.

In the '80s I was doing old-style "feminist work" (events for Take Back the Night and International Women's Day, defense of abortion clinics, discussing sex work, pornography and trafficking in women), thinking about domestic violence in fairly simple ways ("always support the woman no matter what"). My understanding was informed by my work on a battered women's hotline, which is a place to work with unqualified-acceptance-of-a-survivor's-understanding-of-her/his-situation. However personal experiences—as well as the experiences of friends and colleagues—have highlighted how inadequate that "unqualified acceptance" is in political and community contexts.

In the '80s, feminist theorists argued that domestic violence is *not* the victim/survivor's fault, that violence is a decision that the abuser makes, that the abuser has the ability and responsibility to find some other way to address his/her anger, frustration, control issues, and that women (specifically) stay in these relationships (when they do) because they are subject to forces beyond their control (economic, physical, legal, etc.). The premise is, in fact, that abuse of women is specifically part of

men's attempt to exert control over women in this patriarchal society, where the definition of manhood is partially based on the ability to control women as completely as possible. This control by men, both singly and in groups, is exercised through (among other things) interpersonal relationships/actions, the courts, police, the media, employment/restrictions on employment, and in a cultural response of doubt and suspicion against women/survivors who name the behavior and call abusers to account for their actions.

Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, the idea that women/victims/survivors are not to blame for violence against them still needs to be promoted—in anti-establishment scenes as much as anywhere else. (Although plenty of lip service gets paid to this idea, not much actual attention goes to what it means or looks like in action.)

The main limitation of the '80s theory—seeing domestic violence as being only (or even primarily) about sexism/patriarchy/men-oppressing-women—is that it positions the power differential, and the behavior, exclusively within the confines of gender/sex. If the issue is behavior and perspectives that are culturally induced and manipulated, then identity ("identity" in this context being based on what body parts people are born with) is not the problem. Women hit women, men hit men, women hit men, and transnies hit and get hit too. Since the overwhelming majority of injuries from battering relationships are



suffered by women beaten by men, it makes sense to give credit where credit is due. But we can't leave it at that. I have friends who have been involved in the classic scenario of the more privileged man hitting the woman. However, one of my friends has been on both sides of abuse in different lesbian relationships. Two other friends are white, American-born women who were with non-white, non-english-fluent, immigrant men. Arguably these women don't have less "power" (as in social authority) than their partners, and that understanding of power dynamics had an impact on how the women got into, and then dealt with, their relationships. The standard cycle-of-violence scenario that people learn about when they learn about domestic violence doesn't trans-

late easily into discussions about these complicated power dynamics. How much do differences between classes/cultures—at the very least—exacerbate the problem?

How privilege relates to abuse has been worked and re-worked (mostly by the addition of other "isms" to the identity premise—class, race, physical ability, sexuality, gender, looks, etc.) and there is certainly more work to do, because that "working" hasn't yet added much to the conversation.

Battering is also only one part of violence, and focusing on battering to the exclusion of other forms of violence denies the existence of different kinds of power and how they are exercised. Understanding and recognizing these other kinds of power is essential to

challenging abuse; abuse happens on multiple levels in many different, conflicting and/or reciprocal ways. My thinking around this power question was kicked in the ass when I worked in a shelter for homeless families, and watched homeless children playing the shelter staff against their parents around the issue of spanking (parental control of child) vs. child abuse (staff control of parent). We all will find power—or failing that, control—wherever we can.

Those pesky feminists (at least some of them) tried to point out the cultural foundations of violent behavior, and to position abusive relationships in the context of misogynist and/or generally abusive social practices. They tried to hold the culture accountable. As one

more example of a challenging idea continuing to exist only as far as it can be forced to fit into already existing social constructs, the feminist message has been reduced to a shadow of itself. The following are the three reactions to abuse that I see most frequently, all of them simplistic and paralyzing:

One: No one does anything, no one gets involved, no one takes any responsibility to address whatever the problem is, which is seen as personal/isolated, not within the purview of the community, and/or as just "too complicated" to deal with.

Two: The woman/"victim" gets blamed (for being weak, unstable, inarticulate, jealous, etc.) and again, no one does anything. Sometimes this happens after some sort of process, sometimes it just happens.

Three: The survivor is treated as a victim (whether or not s/he wishes to be), and the partner/abuser/victimizer as an asshole who must either confess and self-flagellate or be ostracized from the community (and/or beaten up) as quickly as possible because that's the only way to show that the community (or whatever individuals are putting out this line) take sexism/violence seriously.

The first response blames and isolates the relationship/participants—as if we don't all influence the relationships of our friends and colleagues, or are unaffected by those relationships (more on this later). The second blames the survivor. The third—the twisted-from-feminism version, and the one that I will be talking about the most, since it is the least examined—blames the abuser, which has repercussions more subtle than (but just as problematic as) the first two. The most obvious repercussion is that it keeps us from working with people, or believing that they (and we) can change/get better. It perpetuates "bad guy" thinking, as if people who batter are anomalous, isolatable, not like the rest of us, and are always villains. More subtly, this response encourages people/survivors to find power through their identification with the role/label of victim. This response builds itself from the martyr complex of the christian foundation of this culture: People in this culture can be "powerful"—i.e. gain some authority, some voice—if they've been wronged. (This is connected to the hierarchy-of-oppression thinking in a lot of leftist organizing.

Much denigrated yet common, hierarchy-of-oppression thinking is based on identity politics, and posits oppressions as additive, and people as more valuable the more oppressed they are, i.e. the thinking or perspective of a black, queer, crippled, abused, working class woman is more valid than that of someone who only has two or three oppression stickers on her luggage.)

One defense of this unquestioning-support-of-the-"victim" idea argues that if people are given enough support in their time(s) of trial, they will learn how to be empowered, and can then act with more authority in the rest of their lives. I think that this progression has sometimes happened, and will happen again. I think more often though, people learn that they get support around being a victim, and find ways to consider-themselves-victims/use-their-victim-experiences to continue getting the support/authority that they want/need (it also makes a difference what kind of support people get).

In any relationship there is some real (either past or present) need or desire getting met for both partners. This is true of relationships that include abuse as well. To deny that some need of the survivor/accuser is (or was) getting met—to turn the accused into just a monster—is to betray the accuser's understanding and desire. A stereotypical example: the woman looking for a romantic lover who will take-care-of-her-just-like-in-the-songs gets some of that from the man who is also a controlling, abusive, jealous freak who hits her because she overcooked his tofu. To deny that he fulfilled part of that dream for her is to deny the power of her need, and her autonomy/ability to recognize what she wants and go after it. (Let us not forget the power that culture has to create unrealistic, fucked-up expectations for relationships, romantic and otherwise.)

Another problem with the only-blame-the-accused approach is the tendency to act as if the abused/accuser/victim no longer has any feelings for the other, as if now that the other/accused has been proven to be *bad*, all that remains is figuring out how to dispose of the body. This is the most common reason I have seen for women *not* to call their partners to account. In my experience with friends who have stayed in abusive situations, it hasn't

been because they are forced through economics or law or physical violence to stay in these relationships (although her poverty made the decision harder for one). Some survivor hesitation was because of misplaced shame about being vulnerable. Some was because the survivor is part of the relationship and not merely an object of violence (i.e. there can be complicated questions of who is causing what). And some was because survivors *care* about the people they're in relationship with, and have a context for the violence that they don't expect anyone else to understand. When asking for help, the accuser is usually put in the position of either completely turning on the partner, or of not being taken seriously as a victim/survivor. This all-or-nothing ridiculousness is a cultural response, arguably meaningful for "stranger" violence (and maybe helpful in the very time-specific context of motivating someone to actually move the fuck out), but is definitely *not* useful for dealing with ongoing conflict between people who have loved/cared for each other, who share friends and/or family, spaces, goals.

Being invulnerable/unable-to-be-hurt is one of this culture's fundamental expectations of its members. Invulnerability is expected most intensely of men (in general), and the feminist attempt to reclaim the validity and importance of feelings is a counter to the idea that what is expected of men is what is moral and that "men" are the standard by which we all must measure ourselves.

Of course, again, the struggle to be emotional, to be engaged in ways that this culture discourages, has been simplified/stunted into this it's-okay-to-be-a-victim thing, which is what "feelings" come to be associated with. Everyone I know feels some shame about being vulnerable. Slap me if I'm wrong, but I think the shame about being vulnerable is part of why people go on the attack in a number of different situations, including people who batter *and* people who accuse others of battering. (The challenge here might be about what an "accusation" is, versus what might be called "holding someone accountable," or "challenging someone's behavior," or "figuring out someone's options around how he/she relates to people." Any given phrase can also, of course, be completely accu-

satory and cut off dialogue—the issue becomes one of intention and style.)

There are ways to deal with people's inappropriate, violent, abusive behavior that include everyone's validity/intention. These options include the reality that all relationships exist within a context of friends, acquaintances, working relationships, family and/or social environments, and that these contexts are both part of the workings of a relationship and are affected by the relationship. If we start taking community seriously, and being committed to groups of people, one of the perspective shifts we have to make is the idea that our relationships with each other are distinct from our relationship(s) with our community.

Some ideas about how to address this issue differently.

- Give accused people, as well as the accusers, support. Trust that people would rather get their needs met without hurting the people who care about them, even if they don't know how to stop (or even how to accept that they need to stop).
- Spread the concept that relationships are a community issue as well as an issue between the individuals most directly involved. Talk to everyone involved in the relationship (including friends) about how they participate(d) in inappropriate dynamics, and what they want to change about their own behavior for their next (or their continuing) relationship(s)—although sometimes that process needs to happen after the conflict is more or less resolved. Allow friends and relevant family members to have their own process (perhaps separate from the principal actors) about their own feelings and histories with conflict in general, and the current conflict in particular. In the case of principals who don't want to talk to each other, let the social circles who are affected communicate with each other (not *for* the principals) so that people don't become polarized or third-party-enemies (unless they really insist on it). Get a couple of support people to talk to each other for and/or with the principals, if that's appropriate/desired. Learn how to be vulnerable in front of people who don't necessarily love us. Maintain, create, and value community mediators—those folks who stay in relationship with ev-

eryone and can do that without misrepresenting.

- Understand the real differences that we have between us, and the differences that are more a result of disconnects in style/communication/culture/language. Get used to hearing hard, challenging questions from people

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who love us, so that we are less likely to experience it as accusation in a traumatic moment, or as part of the trauma of a traumatic moment. Learn how to think and talk about relationships (our own and our friends') in critical ways, and get used to doing it. Understand that none of us are rational when it comes to relationships. Pay more attention to intent than to the letter-of-the-law, whatever "law" might mean in different contexts.

- Remember that perhaps the most crucial part of changing this world is figuring out how to relate to ourselves and each other differently; we deserve respect to the extent that we're actually trying, not to the extent that we act like we have the Answer. (Even positing the existence of an "answer" is getting the question wrong.)

One of the reasons that I am motivated to keep working on the issue of intimate violence is because it is so common, and my friends and I have had to deal with it so many times in our lives. Another reason is because the issue is deep and rich and complex. It is both as intimate and as global as a conversation about power can get. Plus a good community response to intimate violence is a fundamental part of keeping the state out of our lives. If the only way that survivors can keep abuse(rs) from killing them is to call the cops (which is a broken tool frequently missing from a tiny toolbox), then that is what they have to do. If the only way that survivors can get childcare (etc.) once they've left their abusers is by getting the state (a.k.a. social services)

involved, then that is what they have to do. A good community response doesn't require us to take over the role of the cops and the state; rather, we can create an entirely different perspective on conflict and community involvement, and then work on various kinds of aid from that perspective.

To the extent that we have real, operating, working, realistic options for people to stop abuse before it starts—and to stop it before it gets lethal—we are taking power away from the state. Direct action gets the goods, damn it.

Representation as Salvation

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June's poetry articulated her oppression in a way that could not be ignored. In order to "mitigate the invisibility and imposed silence..." of marginalized people, the class advocates a similar self-representation as a political act. When this authentic self-representation relies on essentialized notions of culture, the process plays into a multicultural imagination. Oftentimes this occurs as the uncritical acceptance and authentication of identities commercially designed to appeal to dominant class and race desires. These conceived identities legitimate cultural biological orders where authentic "cultural" traditions are celebrated for being more primitive, untouched, communal, and spiritual than the white and privileged consumers. This segregates those who can claim to be affected by modern capitalism. By reasserting a pre-modern 'authenticity', marginalized groups deny their past and continual formation by modern capitalist processes. In this way, these groups can unwittingly play into consumable multicultural fantasies.

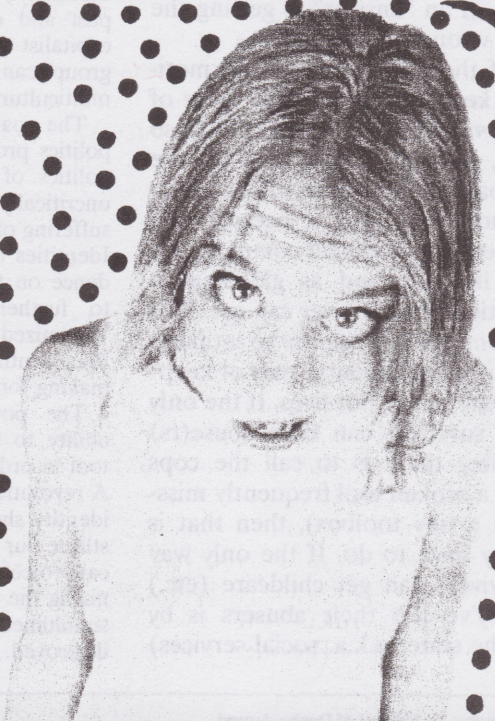
The goals of the class, or of any identity politics project, will not usually aspire to a politics of victimization. When its power uncritically rests on the dramatized political suffering of its members, two things happen. Identities become solidified in their dependence on that oppression, (which can lead to further internalizing of oppression). Victimized identities become fixed, rather than continually challenged and contested, making for weak and limited political goals.

The power of identity politics is the ability to use subordination as a political tool in order to transform and cope with it. A revolutionary or transformative politics of identity should rely on our abilities to constitute our own identities through our political projects and passions. This means recognizing the limits of identity itself while it is simultaneously put to strategic use and destroyed.

christian angst by terry everton

ANNE WAS RAPIDLY GROWING ADEPT AT SURRENDERING HER IDENTITY BY SIMULTANEOUSLY DOING EVERYTHING HER TEACHERS TOLD HER TO DO AND MIMICKING THE CRAP SHE SAW ON TV.

YOU MEAN...IF I MEMORIZE AND ROUTINELY SPOUT BIG-BUSINESS CREEDS, KEEP MY TEETH AS WHITE AS THEY CAN POSSIBLY BE AND SPEND INORDINATE AMOUNTS OF TIME CONCENTRATING ON CELEBRITY CULTURE, THEN THE GOVERNMENT WILL PRETTY MUCH LEAVE ME ALONE?



It's about Time: Schooling as Oppression

Jill Haunold

I don't agree with you people," a teacher told me. "I don't believe that teachers intentionally harm children." Not that I had ever said teachers intentionally hurt children but this was apparently her interpretation of my story about the effect school disciplinary systems have on the behavior of children and adults. She conceded that school conditions were less than ideal for teachers or students. But, she concluded by saying given large class sizes, the little value our society places on children, teachers, and learning as well as other societal problems, which were unlikely to change, there was simply nothing teachers could do. Not wishing to antagonize her further, I simply said I did not think teachers intentionally hurt children.

But I have to question why a teacher would defend her position by telling me teachers don't intentionally do harm. Does this mean she knows teachers hurt children but it is unintentional? Does unintentionality excuse behavior that harms children? And does the unintentionality of the harm allow her to further believe there is nothing she can do about it since she is unaware of what she is doing?

Lacan suggests once "illusion," or a myth that is universally accepted amongst the population of a particular culture, has taken hold, in this case that schools are fine but for a little tweaking, there is little hope for change because facts will simply serve to support the ideology behind the fantasy. That the teacher said she did not think teachers intentionally hurt children instead of simply saying they do not hurt children, would not surprise Lacan. How can it be explained that teachers would continue to do something that causes harm? The popular belief is that if it is just pointed out what they are doing they would change. But using Lacan's logic, it is not likely that teachers do not know what they are doing, nor that they will change. Instead, they are making the choice not to do anything differently because they believe so strongly in the ideology defining what they do. The ideology is the illusion that transforms any knowledge into that which supports the myth itself (Žižek, S. 1999). Here we are speaking of the belief that outside of a few bad teachers and a few problems that could be improved through better public support, school is essentially a good thing. Thus, what is done in the name of school is justifiable. The end justifies the means. Ideology filters any information that would contradict the "goodness" of school. Critical consciousness is required to remove the

filters.

Another, kinder explanation of the unwillingness of teachers to tap their own power for change may come from historian Jill Ker Conway in *True North: A Memoir* (1994). "One has to know the existence of one's rage or passion for change to transmit its energy to others" (p. 152). If Conway is correct, a good strategy for changing schools may be to help teachers and others find their passion and rage.

I can understand why the teacher who says teachers do not intentionally harm children may be angry with me. The teacher may be unconsciously acknowledging that school does harm children. The story exposes herself to herself.

Freire and Foucault theorized that the oppressed typically adopt so completely the ideology and values of their oppressors that they no longer need to be physically dominated because they will do to themselves what those in power cannot impose: they adapt to dominant ideology and are self oppressed, never questioning why they think and do as they do (Foucault, 1977; Freire, 1972). They accept colonization and give up the power struggle. For children, the way out of the power struggle is for them to no longer come under the subjugation of adults; in other words they must become adults. For this to occur, children not only must accept that as children they are less than and inferior to adults, they must firmly know that time is a continuum. To achieve full adult status, they must learn to accept the paradoxical relationship that they are fated to have with time: at once obeying the master—time—and continuously fighting against the constraints imposed by the dominant adult conception of time as a continuum. The future is the goal. There is no present.

There is subversive power in living in the present—being authors of our own lives, past, present and future. School people know this. That is why they use time as a mechanism of control, the threat of a bleak future as a club by which to beat children into submission to the daily grinding out of worksheets and other adult calculated and planned activities. Being in the present—authoring our own lives, past, present and future—is subversive because when we are fully present we are motivated by desire and cannot be controlled by want or fear. The point to our lives becomes the day-to-day meaning we give it and we are no longer afraid of or can be ruled by the outside imposition of consequences.

The idea that children were in need of protection and

saving emerged in America in the late 1800s (Hawes & Hiner, 1985). Patriarchal protection can easily become oppression. And a number of theorists are beginning to suggest that children are an oppressed group. Their oppression, much like womens' and other oppressed groups', stems from being seen as less developed by those in power (Giroux, 2000; Haunold, 2002; Mason & Steadman, 1996). Children are oppressed because they are incomplete. But because childhood is a temporary state they will, if fortunate enough to survive their predicament, be liberated by adulthood.

Adults in schools oppress children. The Medusa head of adult-defined time factors serve as oppressive, repressive, and reproductive mechanisms. Then, rather than being liberated by their adulthood, children are only anointed as adults when they have so completely adopted the time value of adults that they no longer need others to oppress them because they have become slaves to themselves and their own internal and external clocks.

So what? So the students are released from public school a little more organized, a little more efficient, than they were when they were snatched from their homes? Don't we all wish to be better time managers? As one person admonished me about our son, "Well, he has to learn to meet deadlines doesn't he?" I can only answer, "I do not know."

Children may fail at school not because they do not know the things they have been told they must know for the future, but instead because they do not meet workplace organizational standards. Adherence to process is valued over all else. I hope that as reflective adults we will choose to examine the costs that are levied against children during this assault on their present. What does not having a present cost children? Is it the cost that keeps on costing—even through adulthood? Max van Manen contends that these stakes are high and that what children, and thus all of us, lose is hope.

The language of objectives, aims, teacher expectations, intended learning outcomes, goals, or ends in view is a language of hope out of which hope itself has been systematically purged. The language of aims and objectives, therefore, is a language of hopeless hope (van Manen, 1990, 122-123).

We must question the costs of creating a culture where who one is in the present is of little consequence, a culture that is based on suppositious potentialities rather than the present worth of a person.

Vaclav Havel describes hope as:

"...a dimension of the soul, and it's not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons...Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." (Havel, 1990, p.181)

Schools are teaching us to confuse gratification of consumer and marketing driven want with the wholeness brought through the fulfillment of desire. Desire holds within its embrace, passion. We may want a new stereo, car, or furniture but the most enjoyment that things bring is prior to their actual acquisition. There can be little hope in such living

without being in the present. To desire love, happiness, contentment, fulfillment and wholeness—qualities of the heart—is to have hope.

My son brought home the school supply list with this written promise: "Shopping For School Supplies With Your Child Can Be Quality Time and a Positive Family Experience." A great deal of time spent in school centers around the theme of acquisition: acquisition of grades, accumulating points awarded for good behavior that can be traded for free time or stuff, doing the assigned work to get stars on the chart or traded for the attention of the teacher.

What is the meaning of time "spent" in acquisition? Palahniuk (1996) writes a poignant response to what he sees as a culture of people emotionally handicapped by the endless thirst of want in their acquisition-filled lives.

You buy furniture. You tell yourself, this is the last sofa I will ever need in my life. Buy the sofa, then for a couple of years you're satisfied that no matter what goes wrong, at least you've got your sofa issue handled. Then the right set of dishes. Then the perfect bed. The drapes. The rug.

Then you're trapped in your lovely nest, and the things you used to own, now they own you.

May I never be complete.

May I never be content.

May I never be perfect.

During a typical conversation about his school day our teen-age son said, "Mom, you have no idea of the pointlessness of what I do all day." Hearing comments such as this so often as a mother and teacher, I simply nodded knowingly and continued the conversation. It wasn't until I heard this lament again recently from our middle son when asked what was problematic about school for him that I began to think seriously about the meaning of this comment. When pushed for some statement about school, 11-year-old Connor wrote, "There is no point. You only live once." This actually frightened me. I felt this was a rather cynical, hopeless comment from such a young child. I asked what his teachers had said the point was? He said that one dared not ask because school people got angry at this question.

In a dialogue with our son's teacher, she alluded to the school's position of the prescribed point when she said that he needed to be competent at a particular skill for the next grade, junior high, high school, college and then a job. In other words, what he was doing had no point other than its relationship to some future, and a particular future of producing and consuming at that. But, it was the point provided nonetheless. Or point-less.

The school system's response to the pointlessness of what it is doing is to make it relevant to some future. Schools have CIS or Career Information Systems. This is a computer program giving students all the information they need to get into a good college and get a good job. The point is made. Later, when school is completed and the good job competed for and won, there is no longer an available point, so acquisition of stuff becomes the point as it did for the narrator in *Fight Club*. And sometimes feeling good about assisting in and being a member of the continuation of the global economy is enough to take a person discontentedly through to the end of life. But for those unlucky few who begin to question consumption as the point, a hopeless pallor overcomes them, even at age eleven.

HEY, KIDS...TELL US WHAT YOU
LEARNED IN SCHOOL TODAY!

BY HAVING MY INDIVIDUALITY
DISCOURAGED, SUPPRESSED
AND ULTIMATELY PUNISHED
THROUGH THE WITHOLDING OF
PRIVILEGES, TODAY I LEARNED
HOW TO SURRENDER MY WILL
TO A PREDESTINED CHAIN OF
COMMAND!



christian angst by terry overton

The point provided by a local subsidiary of Gannett Corporation Inc. was that school kids learn about winning and losing and success and failure. They informed readers that public school was the socializing agent through which all children must pass. This point is a variation on the consumption theme and provides a handy justification for rewarding oneself with consumption after a hard but successfully fought battle. Losers need not apply.

I wanted badly to give our son the gift of a point. After considering the many possibilities of points, I went to him honestly that evening. Instead, I could do nothing less than give him the true heavy responsibility of his life. Connor, there is no point. Like happiness, it is not somewhere out there waiting for you to find it. I cannot give you a point; were I to try it would only be a shallow superficial point such as buying the coolest sofa. This will not serve you well for the rest of your life. It is a hopeless point. The point comes from you. We all make our own points to our lives and we must do it every minute.

If we continue to provide instant points to children or worse yet get angry when they question the one provided, rather than help them learn how to live their lives meaningfully by making their own points in the world, they will die a slow painful death as they live their meaningless and hopeless acquisition-filled lives.

Michel Foucault is not ambiguous regarding his inclusion of the school as an institution equal to or perhaps even paramount over the prison in its function as a disciplinary power. He states that the "chief function of the disciplinary power is to 'train,' rather than to select and to levy; or, no doubt, to train in order to levy and select all the more...The success of

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MY WORTH!



disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination" (Foucault, 1977, p. 170).

Foucault goes on to state that the physical structure of the school building also plays a significant role in the mechanism for training providing for "continuous surveillance. The very building of the École was to be an apparatus for observation; the rooms were distributed along a corridor like a series of small cells; at regular intervals." (pp. 172-173). Foucault also makes reference to the "mini me" courts that we now refer to as "peer courts" utilized by progressive practitioners to integrate units, provide authentic experiences and give students voice in their governance. Foucault however, views this as giving the future citizens practice in punishing the non-conforming and enforcing the normalizing judgment.

There is a salient difference between being seen and being known. Being known implies being understood, accepted, and perhaps even loved for who we are (Palmer, 1983; Palmer 1998). Being seen or observed however holds much different implications. It allows for a hollow visibility of the student from which those in power may quantify, categorize and punish. In school we prefer children to be "seen but not heard" or known.

Parents have not been left out of the surveillance and control by school people. It is easy to see the role "reporting" to the office, as the signs on front doors of school buildings clearly state a visitor must do, plays in the designation of the relative status of the parents to the overall power structure of the school. Badges. What all visitors must wear as signifiers of menial tasks assigned to visitors such as

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IF PEOPLE ARE TO BE PERSUADED
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SUBSERVENCE!



making copies and cookies (not that I can make a decent cookie) and putting up bulletin boards.

Parents are invited into the school to "help" and are made to be complicit and compliant in the regulating of the time of their children: the timely completion of homework, sleep at the deemed appropriate hour in order for the student to arrive at school on time, ready to learn on the school's schedule and remain alert during the early morning hours. The long arm of school thus regulates the time of the parents as well. Parents, too, become visible and by so doing the invisible disciplinary power institutes "compulsory visibility... Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them" (Foucault, 1977, p. 187). Those parents who wish to remain anonymous are thought to be "uninvolved."

Another method of surveillance and control in school is the examination, which Foucault contends is the pinnacle of disciplinary technologies. Testing is not only an observation technique, it takes time and as such it is a mechanism of control.

"It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized...At the heart of the procedures of discipline, it manifests the subjection of those who are perceived as objects and the objectification of those who are subjected. The superimposition of the power relations and knowledge relations assumes in the examination all its visible brilliance." (pp. 184-185)

"Works only on what interests her," the accusation ran—as if, I reflected obedience outranked passion, as if sensible

people didn't care what they stuck in their minds (Dillard, 1987, p. 223-231).

And, thus, this society commits children to at least 13 years of mind-numbing boredom and then repeatedly we wonder why so many teens are angry and/or depressed. Why is it that a child's cry of boredom falls on deaf adult ears? Is it that many adults have truly come to believe that life really is boring and that children may as well learn to accept this fact early, coming to terms with life's meaninglessness? Is it because most adults' work, and by extension, lives really are boring? Is it because much of the work of today is meaningless and boring and detached from being, and in order for people to accept this as normal we must teach the young early that this is their lot in life? But, we add, learning is fun and we want all you children to be life long learners.

When children say they are bored there is an air of anxious energy about it, as if they are about to explode, of expectations not met, of a lie told and found out, and then as adults explain that this is just the way it is, there is the pervasive air of hopelessness. I suspect school people and most parents do not want to take the accusation of boredom seriously because that would require us to admit perhaps that we too are being made tired and uninterested by the tediousness of how we have chosen to live our lives.

Within a framework of the present, children are free and active agents in constructing their own beings in the present. They become more than a bundle of potential; they live and make meaning now as they discover who they are today. It is only in the act of being present in one's own life that we can meaningfully reconstruct our past in order to inform our present and positively create our futures. This challenges

BY HAVING MY INHERENT CURIOSITY
SUBSTITUTED WITH INCREASED
REWARDS FOR CONFORMITY, TODAY
I LEARNED HOW TO GROW DEPEND-
ENT ON THE PEOPLE WHO TELL
ME WHAT TO DO!



christian angst by terry overton

educators to not teach for tomorrow but teach as if there were no tomorrow.

Doesn't living each moment in time in the present exactly lead to the notion of the brevity of our life's time? Only for those who have been indoctrinated by school's scarcity model. It is not the relative shortness of our terrestrial life that leads us to competition and scarcity. It is living without authenticity for the great expectations we were promised in school. The time we waste in school is not simply mindless, it does precisely what it is supposed to do. People who learn to believe that life is pointless are easily manipulated. It is time we save our children from the ravages of lives in which they attempt to recover from doing time in school. Rather than living life by always doing things on time, it is subversive to live by being in time. Only those people living in the present cannot be controlled by want because they are instead solely motivated by hope, passion, and desire.

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BY BEING SHOWN THE INEVITABILITY
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UNDERCLASS TO PRIMARILY SERVE
THE NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS
ELITE!



THANKS FOR YOUR INPUT, KIDS!
NOW SIT DOWN AND SHUT UP.
OR RECITE THE PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE OR SOMETHING.

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Leftism or Post-Left Critique?

Introduction

At the invitation of its editor the following essays (except for the one by Lawrence Jarach) were contributed to an ongoing debate in the Institute for Anarchist Studies' web newsletter *Theory and Politics*. They are reproduced here to stimulate more serious and substantial discussion on the meanings of left-anarchism and the validity of post-left anarchist critiques.

Post-Left Anarchy: Leaving the Left Behind

by Jason McQuinn

Prologue to Post-Left Anarchy

It is now nearly a decade and a half since the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is seven years since Bob Black first sent me the manuscript for his book, *Anarchy after Leftism*, published in 1997. It's over four years since I asked *Anarchy* magazine Contributing Editors to participate in a discussion of "post-left anarchy," which ultimately appeared in the Fall/Winter 1999-2000 issue of the magazine (#48). And it's also one year since I first wrote and published "Post-Left Anarchy: Rejecting the Reification of Revolt," which appeared in the Fall/Winter 2002-2003 issue (#54) of *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*.

Aside from creating a hot new topic for debate in anarchist and leftist periodicals, web sites and e-mail lists, one can legitimately ask what has been accomplished by introducing the term and the debate to the anarchist, and more generally radical, milieu? In response I'd say that the reaction continues to grow, and the promise of post-left anarchy primarily lies in what appears to be a continually brightening future.

One of the most troubling problems of the contemporary anarchist milieu has been the frequent fixation on attempts to recreate the struggles of the past as though nothing significant has changed since 1919, 1936, or at best 1968. Partly this is a function of the long-prevalent anti-intellectualism amongst many anarchists. Partly it's a

result of the historical eclipse of the anarchist movement following the victory of Bolshevik state communism and the (self-) defeat of the Spanish Revolution. And partly it is because the vast majority of the most important anarchist theorists—like Godwin, Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Malatesta—come from the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The void in the development of anarchist theory since the rebirth of the milieu in the 1960s has yet to be filled by any adequate new formulation of theory and practice powerful enough to end the impasse and catch the imaginations of the majority of contemporary anarchists in a similar manner to Bakunin's or Kropotkin's formulations in the nineteenth century.

Since the 1960s the originally minuscule—but since that time, ever-growing—anarchist milieu has been influenced (at least in passing) by the Civil Rights Movement, Paul Goodman, SDS, the Yippies, the anti-Vietnam War movement, Fred Woodworth, the Marxist New Left, the Situationist International, Sam Dolgoff and Murray Bookchin, the single-issue movements (anti-racist, feminist, anti-nuclear, anti-imperialist, environmental/ecological, animal rights, etc.), Noam Chomsky, Freddie Perlman, George Bradford/David Watson, Bob Black, Hakim Bey, Earth First! and Deep Ecology, neo-Paganism and New Ageism, the anti-globalization movement, and many others. Yet these various influences over the last forty years, both non-anarchist and anarchist alike, have failed to bring to the fore any inspiring new synthesis of critical and practical theory. A few anarchists, most notably Murray Bookchin and the Love & Rage project, have tried and failed miserably in attempting to meld the extremely diverse and idiosyncratic anarchist milieu into a genuinely new movement with a commonly-held theory. I would argue that in our current situation this is a project guaranteed to fail no matter who attempts it.

The alternative argued for by the post-left anarchist synthesis is still being created. It cannot be claimed by any single theorist or activist because it's a project that was in the air long before it started becoming a concrete set of proposals, texts and interventions. Those seeking to promote the synthesis have been primarily influenced by both the classical anarchist movement up to the

Spanish Revolution on the one hand, and several of the most promising critiques and modes of intervention developed since the 60s. The most important critiques involved include those of everyday life and the spectacle, of ideology and morality, of industrial technology, of work and of civilization. Modes of intervention focus on the concrete deployment of direct action in all facets of life. Rather than aiming at the construction of institutional or bureaucratic structures, these interventions aim at maximal critical effectiveness with minimal compromise in constantly changing networks of action.

Clearly these new critiques and modes of intervention are largely incompatible with both the old left of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and most of the New Left of the 60s and 70s. And just as clearly they are engaging a growing number of anarchists who gravitate to them because they seem to be much more congruent with the global situation we find ourselves in today than the old theories and tactics of leftism. If anarchism doesn't change to address the lived realities of the twenty-first century—by leaving the outmoded politics and organizational fetishism of leftism behind—its relevance will dissipate and the opportunities for radical contestation now so apparent will slowly vanish. Post-left anarchy is most simply a rubric through which many thoughtful contemporary anarchists would like to see the most vital of the new critiques and modes of intervention coalesce in an increasingly coherent and effective movement, which genuinely promotes unity in diversity, the complete autonomy of individuals and local groups in struggle, and the organic growth of levels of organization which don't hold back our collective energies, spontaneity and creativity.

Post-Left Anarchy: Rejecting the Reification of Revolt

Introduction

Anarchist critiques of leftism have a history nearly as long as the term "left" has had a political meaning. The early anarchist

movement emerged from many of the same struggles as other socialist movements (which made up a major part of the political left), from which it eventually differentiated itself. The anarchist movement and other socialist movements were primarily a product of the social ferment which gave rise to the Age of Revolutions—introduced by the English, American and French Revolutions. This was the historical period in which early capitalism was developing through the enclosure of commons to destroy community self-sufficiency, the industrialization of production with a factory system based on scientific techniques, and the aggressive expansion of the commodity market economy throughout the world. But the anarchist idea has always had deeper, more radical and more holistic implications than mere socialist criticism of the exploitation of labor under capitalism. This is because the anarchist idea springs from both the social ferment of the Age of Revolutions *and* the critical imagination of individuals seeking the abolition of every form of social alienation and domination.

The anarchist idea has an indelibly individualist foundation upon which its social critiques stand, always and everywhere proclaiming that only free individuals can create a free, unalienated society. Just as importantly, this individualist foundation has included the idea that the exploitation or oppression of any individual diminishes the freedom and integrity of all. This is quite unlike the collectivist ideologies of the political left, in which the individual is persistently devalued, denigrated or denied in both theory and practice—though not always in the ideological window dressing that is meant only to fool the naive. It is also what prevents genuine anarchists from taking the path of authoritarians of the left, right and center who casually employ mass exploitation, mass oppression and frequently mass imprisonment or murder to capture, protect and expand their holds on political and economic power.

Because anarchists understand that only people freely organizing themselves can create free communities, they refuse to sacrifice individuals or communities in pursuit of the kinds of power that would inevitably prevent the emergence of a free society. But given the almost mutual origins of the anarchist movement and the socialist left, as well as their historical battles to seduce or capture the support of the international workers movement by various means, it isn't surprising that over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries socialists have often adopted aspects of anarchist

theory or practice as their own, while even more anarchists have adopted aspects of leftist theory and practice into various leftist-anarchist syntheses. This is despite the fact that in the worldwide struggles for individual and social freedom the political left has everywhere proven itself either a fraud or a failure in practice. Wherever the socialist left has been successful in organizing and taking power it has at best reformed (and

The void in the development of anarchist theory since the rebirth of the milieu in the 1960s has yet to be filled by any adequate new formulation of theory and practice powerful enough to end the impasse and catch the imaginations of the majority of contemporary anarchists in a similar manner to Bakunin's or Kropotkin's formulations in the nineteenth century.

rehabilitated) capitalism or at worst instituted new tyrannies, many with murderous policies—some of genocidal proportions.

Thus, with the stunning international disintegration of the political left following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the time is now past due for all anarchists to reevaluate every compromise that has been or continues to be made with the fading remnants of leftism. Whatever usefulness there might have been in the past for anarchists to make compromises with leftism is evaporating with the progressive disappearance of the left from even token opposition to the fundamental institutions of capitalism: wage labor, market production, and the rule of value.

Leftists in the anarchist milieu

The rapid slide of the political left from the stage of history has increasingly left the international anarchist milieu as the only revolutionary anti-capitalist game in town. As the anarchist milieu has mushroomed in the last decade, most of its growth has come from disaffected youth attracted to its increasingly visible, lively and iconoclastic activities and media. But a significant minority of that growth has also come from former leftists who have—sometimes slowly and sometimes suspiciously swiftly—decided that anarchists might have been right in their critiques of political authority and the

state all along. Unfortunately, not all leftists just fade away—or change their spots—overnight. Most of the former leftists entering the anarchist milieu inevitably bring with them many of the conscious and unconscious leftist attitudes, prejudices, habits and assumptions that structured their old political milieus. Certainly, not all of these attitudes, habits and assumptions are necessarily authoritarian or anti-anarchist, but just as clearly many are.

Part of the problem is that many former leftists tend to misunderstand anarchism only as a form of anti-statist leftism, ignoring or downplaying its indelibly individualist foundation as irrelevant to social struggles. Many simply don't understand the huge divide between a self-organizing movement seeking to abolish every form of social alienation and a merely political movement seeking to reorganize production in a more egalitarian form. While others do understand the divide quite well, but seek to reform the anarchist milieu into a political movement anyway, for various reasons. Some former leftists do this because they consider the abolition of social alienation unlikely or impossible; some because they remain fundamentally opposed to any individualist (or sexual, or cultural, etc.) component of social theory and practice. Some cynically realize that they will never achieve any position of power in a genuinely anarchist movement and opt for building more narrowly political organizations with more room for manipulation. Still others, unused to autonomous thinking and practice, simply feel anxious and uncomfortable with many aspects of the anarchist tradition and wish to push those aspects of leftism within the anarchist milieu that help them feel less threatened and more secure—so that they can continue to play their former roles of cadre or militant, just without an explicitly authoritarian ideology to guide them.

In order to understand current controversies within the anarchist milieu, anarchists need to remain constantly aware—and carefully critical—of all this. *Ad hominem* attacks within the anarchist milieu are nothing new, and most often a waste of time, because they substitute for rational criticism of people's actual positions. (Too often rational criticism of positions is simply ignored by those unable to argue for their own positions, whose only recourse is to wild or irrelevant accusations or attempted smears.) But there remains an important place for *ad hominem* criticism addressed to people's chosen identities, especially when these identities are so strong that they

include sedimented, often unconscious, layers of habits, prejudices and dependencies. These habits, prejudices and dependencies—leftist or otherwise—all constitute highly appropriate targets for anarchist criticism.

Recuperation and the Left-Wing of Capital

Historically, the vast majority of leftist theory and practice has functioned as a loyal opposition to capitalism. Leftists have been (often vociferously) critical of particular aspects of capitalism, but always ready to reconcile themselves with the broader international capitalist system whenever they've been able to extract a bit of power, partial reforms—or sometimes, just the vague promise of partial reforms. For this reason leftists have often been quite justifiably criticized (by both ultra-leftists and by anarchists) as the left wing of capital.

It's not just a problem that those leftists who claim to be anti-capitalist don't really mean it, although some have consciously used such lies to gain positions of power for themselves in opposition movements. The major problem is that leftists have incomplete, self-contradictory theories about capitalism and social change. As a result their practice always tends towards the recuperation (or co-optation and reintegration) of social rebellion. Always with a focus on organization, leftists use a variety of tactics in their attempts to *reify* and *mediate* social struggles—representation and substitution, imposition of collectivist ideologies, collectivist moralism, and ultimately repressive violence in one form or another. Typically, leftists have employed all of these tactics in the most unrepentantly heavy-handed and explicitly authoritarian of ways. But these tactics (except for the last) can also be—and have often been—employed in more subtle, less-overtly authoritarian ways as well, the most important examples for our purposes being the historical and present practices of many (but not all) left anarchists.

Reification is often most generally described as “thingification.” It's the reduction of a complex, living process to a frozen, dead or mechanical collection of objects or actions. Political mediation (a form of practical reification) is the attempt to intervene in conflicts as a third-party arbiter or representative. Ultimately these are the definitive characteristics of all leftist theory and practice. Leftism always involves the reification and mediation of social revolt, while consistent anarchists reject this reification of revolt. The formulation of post-left anarchy is an attempt to help make this rejection of the reification of revolt more consistent, widespread and self-aware than it already is.

Anarchy as a Theory & Critique of Organization

One of the most fundamental principles of anarchism is that social organization must serve free individuals and free groups, not vice versa. Anarchy cannot exist when individuals or social groups are dominated—whether that domination is facilitated and enforced by outside forces or by their own organization.

For anarchists the central strategy of would-be revolutionaries has been the non-mediating (anti-authoritarian, often informal or minimalist) self-organization of radicals (based on affinity and/or specific theoretical/practical activities) in order to encourage and participate in the self-organization of popular rebellion and insurrection against capital and state in all their forms. Even among most left anarchists there has always been at least some level of understanding that mediating organizations are at best highly unstable and unavoidably open to recuperation, requiring constant vigilance and struggle to avoid their complete recuperation.

But for all leftists (including left anarchists), on the other hand, the central strategy is always expressly focused on creating mediating organizations between capital & state on the one side and the mass of disaffected, relatively powerless people on the other. Usually these organizations have been focused on mediating between capitalists and workers or between the state and the working class. But many other mediations involving opposition to particular institutions or involving interventions among particular groups (social minorities, subgroups of the working class, etc.) have been common.

These mediating organizations have included political parties, syndicalist unions, mass political organizations, front groups, single-issue campaign groups, etc. Their goals are always to crystallize and congeal certain aspects of the more general social revolt into set forms of ideology and congruent forms of activity. The construction of formal, mediating organizations always and necessarily involves at least some levels of:

- **Reductionism** (Only particular aspects of the social struggle are included in these organizations. Other aspects are ignored, invalidated or repressed, leading to further and further compartmentalization of the struggle. Which in turn facilitates manipulation by elites and their eventual transformation into purely reformist lobbying societies with all generalized, radical critique emptied out.)

- **Specialization or Professionalism**

(Those most involved in the day-to-day operation of the organization are selected—or self-selected—to perform increasingly specialized roles within the organization, often leading to an official division between leaders and led, with gradations of power and influence introduced in the form of intermediary roles in the evolving organizational hierarchy.)

- **Substitutionism** (The formal organization increasingly becomes the focus of strategy and tactics rather than the people-in-revolt. In theory and practice, the organization tends to be progressively substituted for the people, the organization's leadership—especially if it has become formal—tends to substitute itself for the organization as a whole, and eventually a maximal leader often emerges who ends up embodying and controlling the organization.)

- **Ideology** (The organization becomes the primary subject of theory with individuals assigned roles to play, rather than people constructing their own self-theories. All but the most self-consciously anarchistic formal organizations tend to adapt some form of collectivist ideology, in which the social group at some level is acceded to have more political reality than the free individual. Wherever sovereignty lies, there lies political authority; if sovereignty is not dissolved into each and every person it always requires the subjugation of individuals to a group in some form.)

All anarchist theories of self-organization, on the contrary, call for (in various ways and with different emphases):

- **Individual and Group Autonomy with Free Initiative** (The autonomous individual is the fundamental basis of all genuinely anarchistic theories of organization, for without the autonomous individual, any other level of autonomy is impossible. Freedom of initiative is likewise fundamental for both individuals and groups. With no higher powers comes the ability and necessity for all decisions to be made at their point of immediate impact. As a side note, post-structuralists or postmodernists who deny the existence of the autonomous anarchist individual most often mistake the valid critique of the metaphysical subject to imply that even the process of lived subjectivity is a complete fiction—a self-deluded perspective which would make social theory impossible and unnecessary.)

- **Free Association** (Association is never

free if it is forced. This means that people are free to associate with anyone in any combination they wish, and to dissociate or refuse association as well.)

- **Refusal of Political Authority, and thus of Ideology** (The word "anarchy" literally means no rule or no ruler. No rule and no ruler both mean there is no political authority above people themselves, who can and should make all of their own decisions however they see fit. Most forms of ideology function to legitimate the authority of one or another elite or institution to make decisions for people, or else they serve to delegitimize people's own decision-making for themselves.)
- **Small, Simple, Informal, Transparent and Temporary Organization** (Most anarchists agree that small face-to-face groups allow the most complete participation with the least amount of unnecessary specialization. The most simply structured and least complex organizations leave the least opportunity for the development of hierarchy and bureaucracy. Informal organization is the most protean and most able to continually adapt itself to new conditions. Open and transparent organization is the most easily understood and controlled by its members. The longer organizations exist the more susceptible they usually become to the development of rigidity, specialization and eventually hierarchy. Organizations have life spans, and it is rare that any anarchist organization will be important enough that it should exist over generations.)
- **Decentralized, Federal Organization with Direct Decision-Making and Respect for Minorities** (When they are necessary larger, more complex and formal organizations can only remain self-manageable by their participants if they are decentralized and federal. When face-to-face groups—with the possibility for full participation and convivial discussion and decision-making—become impossible due to size, the best course is to decentralize the organization with many smaller groups in a federal structure. Or when smaller groups need to organize with peer groups to better address larger-scale problems, free federation is preferred—with absolute self-determination at every level beginning with the base. As long as groups remain of manageable size, assemblies of all concerned must be able to directly make decisions according to whatever methods they find agreeable. However,

minorities can never be forced into agreement with majorities on the basis of any fictitious conception of group sovereignty. Anarchy is *not* direct democracy, though anarchists may certainly choose to use democratic methods of decision-making when and where they wish. The only real respect for minority opinions involves accepting that minorities have the same powers as majorities, requiring negotiation and the greatest level of mutual agreement for stable, effective group decision-making)

In the end, the biggest difference is that anarchists advocate self-organization while leftists want to organize you. For leftists, the emphasis is always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre serving their goals. They don't want to see you adopt your own self-determined theory and activities because then you wouldn't be allowing them to manipulate you. Anarchists want you to determine your own theory and activity and self-organize your activity with like-minded others. Leftists want to create ideological, strategic and tactical unity through "self-discipline" (your self-repression) when possible, or organizational discipline (threat of sanctions) when necessary. Either way, you are expected to give up your autonomy to follow their heteronomous path that has already been marked out for you.

Anarchy as a Theory & Critique of Ideology

The anarchist critique of ideology dates from the work of Max Stirner, though he did not use the term himself to describe his critique. Ideology is the means by which alienation, domination and exploitation are all rationalized and justified through the deformation of human thought and communication. All ideology in essence involves the substitution of alien (or incomplete) concepts or images for human subjectivity. Ideologies are systems of false consciousness in which people no longer see themselves directly as subjects in their relation to their world. Instead they conceive of themselves in some manner as subordinate to one type or another of abstract entity or entities which are mistaken as the *real* subjects or actors in their world.

Whenever any system of ideas and duties is structured with an abstraction at its center—assigning people roles or duties for its own sake—such a system is always an ideology. All the various forms of ideology are structured around different abstractions, yet they all always serve the interests of hierarchical and alienating social structures, since they *are* hierarchy and alienation in

the realm of thought and communication. Even if an ideology rhetorically opposes hierarchy or alienation in its content, its form still remains consistent with what is ostensibly being opposed, and this form will always tend to undermine the apparent content of the ideology. Whether the abstraction is God, the State, the Party, the Organization, Technology, the Family, Humanity, Peace, Ecology, Nature, Work, Love, or even Freedom; if it is conceived and presented as if it is an active subject with a being of its own which makes demands of us, then it is the center of an ideology. Capitalism, Individualism, Communism, Socialism, and Pacifism are each ideological in important respects as they are usually conceived. Religion and Morality are always ideological by their very definitions. Even resistance, revolution and anarchy often take on ideological dimensions when we are not careful to maintain a critical awareness of how we are thinking and what the actual purposes of our thoughts are. Ideology is nearly ubiquitous. From advertisements and commercials, to academic treatises and scientific studies, almost every aspect of contemporary thinking and communication is ideological, and its real meaning for human subjects is lost under layers of mystification and confusion.

Leftism, as the reification and mediation of social rebellion, is always ideological because it always demands that people conceive of themselves first of all in terms of their roles within and relationships to leftist organizations and oppressed groups, which are in turn considered more real than the individuals who combine to create them. For leftists history is never made by individuals, but rather by organizations, social groups, and—above all, for Marxists—social classes. Each major leftist organization usually molds its own ideological legitimation whose major points all members are expected to learn and defend, if not proselytize. To seriously criticize or question this ideology is always to risk expulsion from the organization.

Post-left anarchists reject all ideologies in favor of the individual and communal construction of self-theory. Individual self-theory is theory in which the integral individual-in-context (in all her or his relationships, with all her or his history, desires, and projects, etc.) is always the subjective center of perception, understanding and action. Communal self-theory is similarly based on the group as subject, but always with an underlying awareness of the individuals (and their own self-theories) which make up the group or organization. Non-ideological, anarchist organizations (and informal groups) are always explicitly based upon the autonomy of the individuals who construct them, quite unlike leftist organizations

which require the surrender of personal autonomy as a prerequisite for membership.

Neither God, nor Master, nor Moral Order: Anarchy as Critique of Morality and Moralism

The anarchist critique of morality also dates from Stirner's master work, *The Ego and Its Own* (1844). Morality is a system of reified values—abstract values which are taken out of any context, set in stone, and converted into unquestionable beliefs to be applied regardless of a person's actual desires, thoughts or goals, and regardless of the situation in which a person finds him- or herself. Moralism is the practice of not only reducing living values to reified morals, but of considering oneself better than others because one has subjected oneself to morality (self-righteousness), and of proselytizing for the adoption of morality as a tool of social change.

Often, when people's eyes are opened by scandals or disillusionment and they start to dig down under the surface of the ideologies and received ideas they have taken for granted all their lives, the apparent coherence and power of the new answer they find (whether in religion, leftism or even anarchism) can lead them to believe that they have now found the Truth (with a capital 'T'). Once this begins to happen people too often turn onto the road of moralism, with its attendant problems of elitism and ideology. Once people succumb to the illusion that they have found the one Truth that would fix everything—if only enough other people also understood, the temptation is then to view this one Truth as the solution to the implied Problem around which everything must be theorized, which leads them to build an absolute value system in defense of their magic Solution to the Problem this Truth points them to. At this point moralism takes over the place of critical thinking.

The various forms of leftism encourage different types of morality and moralism, but most generally within leftism the Problem is that people are exploited by capitalists (or dominated by them, or alienated from society or from the productive process, etc.). The Truth is that the People need to take control of the Economy (and/or Society) into their own hands. The biggest Obstacle to this is the Ownership and Control of the Means of Production by the Capitalist Class backed up by its monopoly over the use of legalized violence through its control of the political State. To overcome this people must be approached with

evangelical fervor to convince them to reject all aspects, ideas and values of Capitalism and adopt the culture, ideas and values of an idealized notion of the Working Class in order to take over the Means of Production by breaking the power of the Capitalist Class and constituting the power of the Working Class (or its representative institutions, if not their Central Committees or its Supreme Leader) over all of Society.... This

In the end, the biggest difference is that anarchists advocate self-organization while leftists want to organize you. For leftists, the emphasis is always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre serving their goals. They don't want to see you adopt your own self-determined theory and activities because then you wouldn't be allowing them to manipulate you.

often leads to some form of Workerism (usually including the adoption of the dominant image of the culture of the working class, in other words, working-class lifestyles), a belief in (usually Scientific) Organizational Salvation, belief in the Science of (the inevitable victory of the Proletariat in) Class Struggle, etc. And therefore tactics consistent with building the fetishized One True Organization of the Working Class to contest for Economic and Political Power. An entire value system is built around a particular, highly oversimplified conception of the world, and moral categories of good and evil are substituted for critical evaluation in terms of individual and communal subjectivity.

The descent into moralism is never an automatic process. It is a tendency which naturally manifests itself whenever people start down the path of reified social critique. Morality always involves derailing the development of a consistent critical theory of self and society. It short-circuits the development of strategy and tactics appropriate for this critical theory, and encourages an emphasis on personal and collective salvation through living up to the ideals of this morality, by idealizing a culture or lifestyle as virtuous and sublime, while demonizing everything else as being either the temptations or perversions of evil. One inevitable emphasis then becomes the petty, continuous attempt to enforce the bound-

aries of virtue and evil by policing the lives of anyone who claims to be a member of the in-group sect, while self-righteously denouncing out-groups. In the workerist milieu, for example, this means attacking anyone who doesn't sing paeans to the virtues of working class organization (and especially to the virtues of the One True form of Organization), or to the virtues of the dominant image of Working Class culture or lifestyles (whether it be beer drinking instead of drinking wine, rejecting hip subcultures, or driving a Ford or Chevy instead of BMWs or Volvos). The goal, of course, is to maintain the lines of inclusion and exclusion between the in-group and the out-group (the out-group being variously portrayed in highly industrialized countries as the Middle and Upper Classes, or the Petty Bourgeois and Bourgeois, or the Managers and Capitalists big and small).

Living up to morality means sacrificing certain desires and temptations (regardless of the actual situation you might find yourself in) in favor of the rewards of virtue. Don't ever eat meat. Don't ever drive SUVs. Don't ever work 9-5. Don't ever scab. Don't ever vote. Don't ever talk to a cop. Don't ever take money from the government. Don't ever pay taxes. Don't ever etc., etc. Not a very attractive way to go about living your life for anyone interested in critically thinking about the world and evaluating what to do for oneself.

Rejecting Morality involves constructing a critical theory of one's self and society (always self-critical, provisional and never totalistic) in which a clear goal of ending one's social alienation is never confused with reified partial goals. It involves emphasizing what people have to gain from radical critique and solidarity rather than what people must sacrifice or give up in order to live virtuous lives of politically correct morality.

Post-Left Anarchy: Neither Left, nor Right, but Autonomous

Post-left anarchy is not something new and different. It's neither a political program nor an ideology. It's not meant in any way to constitute some sort of faction or sect within the more general anarchist milieu. It's in no way an opening to the political right; the right and left have always had much more in common with each other than either has in common with anarchism. And it's certainly not intended as a new commodity in the already crowded market-

place of pseudo-radical ideas. It is simply intended as a restatement of the most fundamental and important anarchist positions within the context of a disintegrating international political left.

If we want to avoid being taken down with the wreckage of leftism as it crumbles, we need to fully, consciously and explicitly dissociate ourselves from its manifold failures—and especially from the invalid presuppositions of leftism which led to these failures. This doesn't mean that it's impossible for anarchists to also consider themselves leftists—there has been a long, most often honorable, history of anarchist and left syntheses. But it does mean that in our contemporary situation it is not possible for anyone—even left-anarchists—to avoid confronting the fact that the failures of

leftism in practice require a complete critique of leftism and an explicit break with every aspect of leftism implicated in its failures.

Left anarchists can no longer avoid subjecting their own leftism to intensive critique. From this point on it is simply not sufficient (not that it really ever has been) to project all the failures of leftism onto the most explicitly obnoxious varieties and episodes of leftist practice, like Leninism, Trotskyism and Stalinism. The critiques of leftist statism and leftist party organization have always been only the tip of a critique that must now explicitly encompass the entire iceberg of leftism, including those aspects often long incorporated into the traditions of anarchist practice. Any refusal to broaden and deepen the criticism of

leftism constitutes a refusal to engage in the self-examination necessary for genuine self-understanding. And stubborn avoidance of self-understanding can never be justified for anyone seeking radical social change.

We now have the unprecedented historical opportunity, along with a plenitude of critical means, to recreate an international anarchist movement that can stand on its own and bow to no other movements. All that remains is for all of us to take this opportunity to critically reformulate our anarchist theories and reinvent our anarchist practices in light of our most fundamental desires and goals.

Reject the reification of revolt. Leftism is dead! Long live anarchy!

Anarchists in Wonderland: The Topsy-Turvy World of Post-Left Anarchy

by Peter Staudenmaier

Since the editors of *Anarchy* magazine began promoting it several years ago, the vague category of post-left anarchism has generated considerable debate among practically and theoretically engaged anarchists. In the course of these discussions, anarchists from a variety of backgrounds have posed a wide range of critical questions to the promoters of the post-left idea. Most of these questions have gone unanswered, and not a few of them have provoked a remarkable level of vituperation from those who find the new post-left label appealing. This leaves the discussion at something of an impasse; when the post-leftists cannot agree among themselves on even the most basic conceptual matters, such as what they mean by "the left," it is difficult for the rest of us to know exactly what it is we are being asked to believe.

Throughout this thoroughly muddled dispute, the most consistently reasonable theorist for the post-left tendency has been Jason McQuinn, founding editor of *Anarchy* magazine. McQuinn's take on the post-left idea is essentially a recapitulation of the themes that have preoccupied him since the 1970s: the critique of ideology, the rejection of moralism, suspicion toward formal organization, and the liberatory power of individual desire. These are familiar topics for many anarchists today, and have also found significant resonance among non-anarchist sectors of various radical movements.

There is much to be said about each of these notions in their specifically anarchist

form, and McQuinn's latest essay offers ample opportunity to reflect on their implications for our praxis. What all this might have to do with rejecting "the left" as such, however, remains rather obscure. Indeed many of the core ideas of post-leftism trace their genealogy to left traditions themselves. The critique of organization, for example, is deeply indebted to the work of Jacques Camatte; the insistence on linking subjective psychological factors with broader social forces is presaged in the thinking of Cornelius Castoriadis; and the whole re-orientation toward domination as our central critical term was theorized by the Frankfurt School and by Social Ecology long before it gained currency in the pages of *Anarchy*.

Despite the provenance of many of its own fundamental principles, however, post-leftism adamantly rejects any accommodation with what it takes to be "the left." This phrase itself seems to expand or contract to fit the circumstances; when post-left anarchists talk about leftists, sometimes they mean sectarian splinter groups and authoritarian demagogues, and sometimes they mean everybody from Bukharin to Bookchin. Many anarchists drawn to the post-left label appear to live in a world in which all leftists are Leninists, except when they're liberals, and where the left as a whole is an ominous iceberg of power-worship threatening to sink a virtually Titanic-sized anarchist movement.

Since I do not live in that world, I am frequently at a loss when asked to reply to the claims of post-leftism. In the world where I live, the left is an extraordinarily variegated continuum of conflicting participants and perspectives, not a monolithic entity that can be reduced to a few neat premises. And the anarchist movement is a relatively small but vitally important current within that broader continuum, a current

that still has much to learn from other radical tendencies and social movements. But in the hope of sparking something like a coherent debate on these questions, I will once more venture down the rabbit-hole and see what sense I can make of post-left theory in its myriad forms.

McQuinn's latest essay begins on a promising note. He observes, accurately enough, that the "void in the development of anarchist theory" has "yet to be filled by any adequate new formulation," and offers the post-left alternative as a way to address this gap. His conclusion strikes a conciliatory tone as well: "there has been a long, most often honorable, history of anarchist and left syntheses." This would seem to leave considerable room for critical engagement between anarchists and leftists.

But this raises an obvious problem: Why are McQuinn's more judicious statements of the post-left position at odds with both the details of his own argument and the vehement declarations of so many other post-left anarchists? The simplest explanation is that adherents of post-leftism are still working out the specifics of their vision, something that other anarchists can hardly fault them for. In this process, however, a number of the more troubling versions of post-left thinking will require serious reconsideration if the tendency is to live up to its own best intentions. And it is far from clear that McQuinn's current proposal is able to accommodate this much-needed reconsideration.

Perhaps the most telling instances of post-left zeal can be found in a sprawling on-line debate from 2002, hosted by the comrades at infoshop.org. The exchange can be found here: <http://flag.blackened.net/forums/viewtopic.php?t=1255>

Just about the only thing to emerge clearly from that discussion was that a number of the more vocal post-left anar-

chists are committed to a series of implausible claims that McQuinn's essay does not address, much less defend. We might simply stop at this point and ask, Will the real post-leftists please stand up? But maybe a more productive approach is to read McQuinn's contribution in light of the background provided by less discreet fans of the post-left position.

Let's begin with the nebulous notion of "the left" that animates the post-left critique. The leftists we meet in the extravagant denunciations proffered by post-left anarchists are an impressively protean bunch: they are all simultaneously totalitarians and reformists; their movements are disintegrating, trapped in inevitable decline, yet their mere presence threatens to overwhelm those anarchists foolish enough to ignore the urgent danger; they are ruthlessly fixated on an all-encompassing abstract ideology, yet at the same time they fritter away their activist energies on single-issue concrete campaigns. Even their opposition to capitalism is mostly fake. McQuinn himself relies on such caricatured portraits more often than not; his essay resounds with telltale modifiers like "all" and "every," "always" and "everywhere." This lack of nuance does little to further anarchist evaluations of left practice.

McQuinn is similarly fond of sweeping assertions about what "the vast majority" of leftists have thought and done throughout history. More careful descriptions are overshadowed by categorical pronouncements: "For leftists, the emphasis is always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre serving their goals." To an extent this can be chalked up to simple rhetorical excess, but such undifferentiated claims are often taken literally by the post-leftist faithful, who fail to notice that these indiscriminate generalizations do not accord well with McQuinn's ringing criticisms of reductionism.

The post-left image of "the left" is not just overly simplified, it is frequently wrong on the particulars. McQuinn writes, for example, that the "critique of everyday life" is "largely incompatible" with "most of the New Left of the 60s and 70s." In Germany, France, and North America, at the very least, large segments of the New Left enthusiastically embraced the critique of everyday life; indeed the profoundly anti-authoritarian upsurge of that era—which was of course accompanied by an authoritarian backlash—owed much of its vigor and incisiveness to this re-orientation toward everyday relationships. The influential three-volume work *The Critique of Everyday Life* was written not

by an anarchist, but by the French leftist Henri Lefebvre.

Themes such as the critique of everyday life and the critique of ideology have in fact been central to radical forms of left politics for decades. The classic primer by Richard Gombin, for example, *The Origins of Modern Leftism*, devotes a pivotal chapter to "A Critique of Everyday Life." More important, the concrete practice of countless New

The leftists we meet in the extravagant denunciations proffered by post-left anarchists are an impressively protean bunch: they are all simultaneously totalitarians and reformists; their movements are disintegrating, trapped in inevitable decline, yet their mere presence threatens to overwhelm those anarchists foolish enough to ignore the urgent danger...Even their opposition to capitalism is mostly fake.

Leftists was explicitly predicated on a forceful rejection of precisely those values which McQuinn takes to be constitutive of the left as such. This strand of left radicalism did not appear out of nowhere in the 1960s; it has its roots in earlier figures such as Alexandra Kollontai or Wilhelm Reich, and found one of its most articulate spokespeople in Herbert Marcuse, whose work on the topic reached back to the 1930s. All of these individuals were non-anarchist leftists.

Similar points could be made about the critique of industrial technology, which McQuinn also takes to be essentially foreign to leftist thought. The actual history of the left includes numerous instances when such innovative critical approaches emerged to contest the conformism and repressiveness of the cadre model. There is no sensible reason to collapse this multifaceted record into a one-dimensional tale of leftist perfidy. Moreover, some leftists have been thoughtful and resolute allies of anarchism at crucial junctures in our history. Many anarchists learn about the Spanish revolution through the superb account *Homage to Catalonia*, penned by George Orwell. Orwell was a leftist who fought side by side with other leftists and anarchists against both the right and the Stalinists in Spain. Today one of the chief ways that inquisitive anarchists have easy access to the classics of our own tradition is through the work of leftists like

Daniel Guerin. Selective memory will not help us make sense of the conflicted history of left interactions with anarchists.

But the problem here goes beyond one-sided depictions of the left. Post-left anarchists also rely on a truncated conception of anarchism itself. McQuinn's essay is not immune to this tendency; at several points he insists that anarchism as a whole rests on an "indelibly individualist foundation." If this were true, it would be difficult to explain the centuries-old internal struggles between individualist anarchists and social anarchists. Without recapitulating these debates here, suffice it to say that many contemporary anarchists reject McQuinn's contention that "collectivism" is inherently suspect while "individual self-theory" is the source of liberation. His ill-considered invocations of Stirner aside, McQuinn neglects the crucial dialectic between individual and collective that is the distinctive feature of social anarchist praxis. While we can probably all agree with McQuinn's observation that "without the autonomous individual, any other level of autonomy is impossible," post-leftists would do well to remember that the reverse is equally true: Without

autonomous collectivities, individual autonomy is impossible. McQuinn's commitment to individualist assumptions leads him to misconstrue this fundamental relationship. Getting things more or less backwards, he writes that "only free individuals can create a free, unalienated society." But free individuals do not drop out of the sky; they are themselves the product of free societies.

This myopic insistence on individual autonomy comes back to haunt post-leftism when its more hyperbolic advocates take the floor. In the aforementioned infoshop debates, several spokespeople for post-left positions emphatically declared their opposition to egalitarianism (hardly surprising in a tendency that takes its cues from Stirner and Nietzsche), and a number of them claimed to reject social institutions per se, maintaining that all social structures of whatever sort are inherently oppressive. Forgetting the cultural context within which many US-based anarchists operate, some of these post-leftists carry the ideal of rugged individualism to the point of self-parody, declaring that in the liberated future, nobody will ever have to associate with people they don't personally like. One of them summed up the post-left stance by saying simply "I want to be left alone," free of all the annoying attachments of social life, without other people interjecting their own opinions or offering critical comments on each other's behavior.

Though the promoters of these notions strenuously deny it, what this attitude amounts to is a rejection of the very possibility of communal existence. If all social structures are inherently oppressive, there is no point in trying to create a free society. If libertarian and participatory social institutions are impossible by definition, we can all stay home and read Foucault. It may seem trivial to state these matters so baldly, but sharing the world with other people means that sometimes we can't do exactly what we want to do, and sometimes we will indeed need to cooperate with people we don't like very much. The false promise of absolute individual autonomy is not simply an idle fantasy, it is profoundly indebted to those classical liberal principles that underwrite capitalist society as we know it. Genuine autonomy is not the mere absence of constraints. In its more extreme versions, the post-left vision is encumbered by a negative conception of freedom, a conception reduced to the liberty of atomized individuals, who jealously guard their private rights and prerogatives. It cannot accommodate a positive conception of social freedom, a kind of freedom that flourishes in cooperation with others and demands equality as its necessary counterpart, a kind of freedom that is embodied in anti-authoritarian social structures and cooperative social practices.

Many post-left enthusiasts also seem to think of "leftists" as a bunch of busybodies who are constantly telling other people what to do. Some leftists do fit this description, and it is likely that this propensity often compounds the existing authoritarian disposition of a certain leftist personality type. But apart from the fact that these same trends are fiercely combatted by many other leftists of a more anti-authoritarian disposition, there is something disconcertingly complacent about the unexamined perceptions of proper behavior that underlie this particular post-left complaint. After all, liberatory forms of social interaction sometimes require us to challenge each other's opinions and actions rather than just accepting them. The world will not be a better place if we keep our thoughts to ourselves and largely leave each other alone—especially when we're engaged with people who are not our personal friends and familiar acquaintances. The time-honored anarchist principle of free association does not license insularity; instead it encourages exploration and mutual recognition, including critical contestation of what other people say and do. This is how social cohesion is kept transparent and solidarity is nourished. To abandon such efforts in the name of individual sovereignty would mean an impoverishment of anarchist comradeship.

McQuinn's essay does not confront this form of post-left repressive tolerance, whose

deeper implications are actually an invitation to intolerance and parochialism. Rather McQuinn focuses his attention on the manifold shortcomings of contemporary radical politics. Overlooking the aporias of his own theory, he notes that "leftists have incomplete, self-contradictory theories about capitalism and social change." But we all have these. Capitalism is a contradictory system. Revolutionary social change is an incomplete process. Working through these contradictions requires close attention to the concrete determinants of currently prevalent modes of domination and hierarchy, so that we can create forms of resistance adequate to the particular demands of our specific historical and social situation. Under present conditions, trumpeting our commitment to "general social revolt" simply promotes the kind of false generalism that is already rife in North American anarchist circles. Too many of us think that since we're anarchists, we are "by definition" opposed to all forms of oppression; thus we don't really need to grapple with any of them in particular. This is one area where an informed engagement with several left traditions could do anarchists a lot of good. Instead of the abstract negation of existing society that post-leftists sometimes preach, critical contact with "single-issue campaigns" and experienced activists can help us move toward a determinate negation of the systems of power that surround us.

Learning from the civil rights struggle, for example, or the strategies pioneered by peasant revolts in the global south, could bring a wealth of grassroots perspectives to bear on the contestations we are part of in our own local contexts. But an anarchism that hopes to "stand on its own and bow to no other movements" will be ill equipped to engage in this sort of learning process; indeed it will be unprepared for active solidarity with those movements it consigns to "the left." This attitude exacerbates the existing tendency among anarchists to consider our own perspectives invariably more comprehensive than those of non-anarchists. Whether there is in fact "a huge divide" between the project of abolishing "every form of social alienation," on the one hand, and the myriad sub-projects concentrating on particular instances of alienation on the other, is not a question that can be answered in advance. The more radicalized and ambitious such concrete struggles become, the more they narrow this gap and reach toward fuller forms of liberation. But this is a matter of practice, of hands-on confrontation with specific manifestations of unfreedom under definite historical conditions. To declare such "partial goals" woefully incomplete is to miss the point. Adopting a more all-encompassing critical view-

point, even one that fancies itself free of reification and ideology, does not in itself render the social circumstances ripe for total revolution.

In overlooking these potentially radicalizing occasions for mutual aid and reciprocal learning, the post-left tendency deprives itself of a much-needed counterweight to its individualist preferences and its skepticism toward democratic procedures. At times this suspicion toward collective endeavors and toward non-anarchist varieties of radicalism suggests a misguided desire for purity: We are the only ones with an uncompromising commitment to thoroughgoing liberation in all spheres of life, post-left anarchists sometimes seem to say, and we must guard against contaminating this precious legacy with insufficiently intransigent elements. In its most unreflective form, this mindset is nothing more than a recipe for anarchist sectarianism, the bane of any movement that wants to change the world.

All of this casts a rather different light on McQuinn's forays into psychology. He is convinced that left anarchists who are unpersuaded by the rhetoric of post-leftism are simply anxiously resisting "the self-examination necessary for genuine self-understanding." In reality, a number of post-leftism's critics have tried to provoke greater self-examination among anarchists, a more serious re-appraisal of the lacunae within our own traditions, by questioning the tendentially elitist undertones that mark so much anarchist discourse. Individualist strands of anarchism are especially susceptible to a disdain for "the masses," and the post-left persuasion frequently accentuates the inegalitarian aspects of this worldview. A few post-left anarchists go so far as to extol the right wing tendencies within anarchism as a healthy corrective to the grave dangers of social equality and the dastardly connivance of anarchists and power-mad leftists.

On this score, McQuinn's essay sets off alarm bells for readers familiar with the neglected history of anarchist flirtations with the right. Anarchism has long had something of a Janus face, oscillating between emancipatory and exclusivist poles. Stirner himself is an exemplary figure in this regard: simultaneously the chief inspiration for one wing of anarchism, and a darling of the right, from its proprietarian faction to its pronounced elitist and authoritarian variants. The problem here is not really that of an "opening to the political right," as McQuinn anticipates, but rather the naïve notion that anarchists can now, through force of will alone, walk through the looking glass into the promised land of "neither left nor right." Post-left anarchists would do well to examine the history of this foolish slogan before adopting it into their reper-

toire. In its modern form the phrase was popularized by the right wing of the German Greens, particularly the far-right authoritarian Herbert Gruhl, during the reactionary backlash of the early 1980s. But the roots of the neither-left-nor-right idea go considerably further back; a version of this stance was popular within the nationalist and populist *völkisch* movement in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany, and the pretence of offering a 'third way' between left and right became one of the major selling points for European fascism.

Anarchists have not always escaped this kind of political disorientation. From the peculiar response of Proudhonists to the Dreyfus Affair, to the Italian syndicalists who joined Mussolini, to the "national anarchists" and "third positionists" of today, anarchist militants have sometimes found a comfortable home on the extreme right end of the spectrum. Although post-left anarchists often dismiss such cases as either isolated or irrelevant, the record of anarchist crossover into far right terrain is in fact remarkably long. Among the better known examples are Georges Sorel in

France, Günther Bartsch in Germany, Troy Southgate in Britain, and Bill White in the US. The desire to move 'beyond left and right' played a key role in several of these instances, and continues to do so today. The conclusion to McQuinn's essay suggests an indifferent attitude, at best, toward this regrettable history.

All in all, the post-left paradigm still needs a lot of refining. In the midst of condemning reductionism, reification, and the failed politics of the sectarian left, it relies on a reductionist view of left history and a reified notion of absolute individuality while encouraging the sectarian strands within anarchism. The much-needed process of theoretical and practical refinement would be more effective if post-left adherents could bring themselves to engage with the criticisms put forward by left anarchists. Indeed that step alone might spur a rethinking of the categories post-leftists hold so dear, along with a recognition that there are important libertarian and anti-statist strands within the left. Drawing the consequences from this recognition would likely mean a major overhaul of post-left anarchism

in its present form. In place of wholesale rejection of a mythical "left" that is devoid of distinctions, post-leftists would have to acknowledge that the left, just like the right, is an extremely heterogeneous spectrum, not a single entity, and that some of its currents warrant more than scorn.

Anarchists are working toward a society where everyone who wants to can participate in social affairs on an equal footing, where domination and hierarchy have been replaced by solidarity and self-management. The project of creating such a society will require cooperation with a broad range of oppositional movements, many of whom have solid grounds for refraining from a wholehearted embrace of anarchist doctrine. A nuanced understanding of how our own principles can be articulated to the insights and experiences of compatible struggles will go a long way toward overcoming the blind spots in the anarchist tradition. An anarchism that wishes to avoid reification and leave the mistakes of the past behind will take this lesson to heart

On the radical virtues of being left alone; deconstructing Staudenmaier

by Lawrence Jarach

The Unoriginality Argument

The first thing a critic does who can't deal with the content of what s/he is criticizing is to try to show that it isn't original. Like the argument that workers' self-management is more efficient at production than private ownership, this argument relies exclusively on capitalist criteria (innovation being seen as the sure road to success). So like most critics who show little desire to understand their targets, Peter Staudenmaier (PS) first attacks post-left anarchism (PLA) by asserting that it isn't original—even though nobody says it is. In fact, like anarchism itself, it can be seen as an attempt to provide a (more or less) coherent theoretical framework for, and a description of, a tendency already being expressed. The neo-Platformists are fond of quoting the authors of the "Platform" when the latter said that anarchism didn't spring forth from the minds of great thinkers like Bakunin and Kropotkin, but rather was their objective analysis of contemporary class struggles. Clearly the anarchic impulse can be seen in many rebellions and writings

that predate the moment when Proudhon proudly proclaimed himself an anarchist. So too it is with the discussions that make up PLA. We are merely trying to make the argument that this impulse against conformity, polarized dualities, centralization, bureaucracy, nationalism, the cult of personality (etc.), has been a part of anarchist theory and practice from the beginning (and probably existed before as well). The urge to distance anarchism from the authoritarian nature of leftism was already strong by the time Marx and Engels were able to design and execute the expulsion of Bakunin and most of his fans from the First International.

The Bad Faith Argument

PS's proof for the unoriginality of PLA is that it resembles the critiques of—horror of horrors—leftists! Camatte, Castoriadis, and the various theorists attached to the Frankfurt School are cited as major (perhaps he would have preferred to say exclusive) influences on what he sees as the core components of PLA. But since he has only a rudimentary and bad faith understanding of PLA (in that he isn't really interested in debating its proponents—as can be seen by his insulting and evasive allegations), he cannot hope to have a comprehensive grasp on its influences. He links these leftists to PLA as if this were some secret he has discovered and can therefore proudly expose, hoping that the whole PLA house of

cards will come tumbling down. PS smugly points out the leftist pedigree of this constellation of thinkers as if PLAs wanted to remove any possible connection with any leftist at any time, as if the PLA discourse were called "anti-left" or "non-left" anarchism (another bad faith, and I would go so far as to say dishonest, slur intended to prove that PLA is actually a right-wing phenomenon—more about that below). The "post" in PLA clearly means that leftists have influenced PLAs, and that we recognize that anarchism has an undisputed leftist genealogy—but it is the aim of PLA to move anarchist theory and practice beyond those limits.

I would venture to guess that most who consider themselves PLAs or who are interested in PLA have at least heard of or know something about Camatte, Castoriadis, Marcuse, Benjamin, Adorno, *et al.* I have read some of their works, just as I have read material by lots of other non-anarchists (like Reich, Foucault, Debord, Memmi among others), who have influenced me, and whose writings have spurred me on to deeper analyses of various topics. I would say that the aspects of leftist thought and practice that bothered most or all of those authors enough to critique them from the inside (as it were) are the same kinds of things that (do and should) bother PLAs as well. Is PS trying to say that since PLAs have been influenced to different degrees by leftist thinkers, that therefore PLAs cannot declare themselves "post" left?

The (False) My School is Original Argument

Tossing Social Ecology in the mix accomplishes two things. First, PS situates SE within a leftist lineage, something nobody disputes. Second, he repeats the absurd (bordering on delusional) claim that it was the Founder of Social Ecology, PS's mentor Murray Bookchin, who, within the past 40 years—and almost single-handedly—introduced a critical analysis of domination into anarchist theory. Who made this claim? Murray himself. It's funny; I remember Proudhon and Bakunin mentioning something about domination when they wrote more than a century ago. Rewriting/inventing history definitely puts Social Ecology firmly within the fine tradition of leftism.

The Straw Man Argument

The next ploy is to fabricate positions not held by any of his targets. To be generous to PS, perhaps some of his allegations are true; but we'd never know it because he never says who holds such positions, denying everyone the possibility of either agreeing with or refuting him.

The first allegation is that "post-leftism adamantly rejects any accommodation with what it takes to be 'the left.'" Not to be too much of a smart-ass, but "post-leftism" doesn't do anything post-leftists do. In any case, which post-leftists reject "any accommodation" with the left? What does "accommodation" look like, and then, what does its rejection look like?

PS is unsatisfied with the configuration of the left that has been offered by post-leftists, complaining that the term "itself seems to expand or contract to fit the circumstances." This is a neat rhetorical trick, perhaps, but one that remains unconvincing. Here's what I have said in two different places:

"...the Left includes council communism, Leninism, social democracy, certain kinds of liberalism, and various other aspects of reined-in capitalism"

(from a letter sent to the British periodical *Total Liberty*, and published in *Black Badger* #4, 2000)

"The Left has consistently been identified with the international labor movement from the time of the First International; with the shift of focus from western Europe toward Russia beginning in 1917 and continuing into the 1960s, leftists have identified themselves in relation to events that occurred in the workers' paradise. The leftist agenda is predicated on the use of legislation, representative government and all of its coercive institutions, centralized economic planning by technocrats and other experts, and a commit-

ment to hierarchical social relations."
(from "Don't Let the Left(overs) Ruin Your Appetite," *Anarchy* magazine #48, Fall/Winter 1999-2000)

While PS can't be held responsible for not reading the first (*Black Badger* has only limited distribution), the second excerpt comes from the issue of *Anarchy* that tried to initiate this discussion; the words on the cover—in big red letters—say "Post-Left Anarchy!" One might think that PS, as an aspiring critic of the trend, might have wanted to read the four essays that started this whole thing. Sadly, we'll never know if he did, since he never cites any of those authors, let alone their essays.

PS further complains: "Many anarchists drawn to the post-left label appear to live in a world in which all leftists are Leninists, except when they're liberals, and where the left as a whole is an ominous iceberg of power-worship threatening to sink a virtually Titanic-sized anarchist movement." Who says that all leftists are Leninists? Not me, as can be seen from the two quotes above (and since, as will be seen later, PS knows who I am, he can hardly be let off the hook for overlooking what I've written in places besides the internet). Leninists are a subset of leftism, as are (left) liberals. Who remains? Social democrats? Who else? PS never tells us.

PLAs can perhaps be faulted for tending to ignore the full spectrum of what usually gets called the left but why should the champions of the left avoid it? Maybe PS should tell us what the left is, so we can determine if we agree with his determination.

The left is certainly larger than all the anarchists (of whatever tendency) put together. Where does PS get the idea that PLAs think of the anarchist movement as huge? Regardless of the relative sizes of each tendency, however, leftists have proven over the past hundred years (in places as diverse as Mexico, Russia, China, Spain, Cuba) their homicidal predisposition when dealing with anarchists. "Ominous"? "Power-worship[ing]"? Indeed. Given the historical facts, why shouldn't they be so considered?

PS then avers, "the anarchist movement is...a current that still has much to learn from other radical tendencies and social movements." Who says anything different? As already mentioned, I have learned plenty from non-anarchist radical thinkers, and I expect to do more of that in the future. But I know where I won't be looking: in the history and theories of Leninism and liberalism and social democracy. Education is a process of learning what is useful as well as what is pernicious; what I have learned from mainstream leftism I consider not useful for promoting any kind of anarchy.

This is my educated opinion and analysis. PS offers nothing to dissuade me from these conclusions.

Other straw man slurs include the following: "A few post-left anarchists go so far as to extol the right-wing tendencies within anarchism as a healthy corrective." Just who these post-left anarchists might be, or what right-wing tendencies they extol, remains a complete mystery. Then there's the old stand-by of the right-wing canard: "Post-left anarchists would do well to examine the history of this foolish slogan before adopting it into their repertoire." What slogan? "Neither left nor right," which is yet another example of PS's fake concerns. No post-left anarchist I know of uses this slogan for the simple reason that this tendency is called "post-left," not "post-right" (the only place that I've seen it is in the subscription ad for this journal—and it's an ad, not a manifesto.) In fact, there's nothing in the post-left anarchist discussions that can be put within the realm of right-wing politics.

As I wrote to a comrade in *Black Badger* #5 (2002):

"I have a few things to say about this Beyond Left and Right bullshit. The reason that post-left anarchists (at least some of my pals and me) say that we're post-left is that we acknowledge that anarchism has been historically considered part of the revolutionary left. No serious anarchist would ever say that anarchism has to be post-right. Anarchists are not 'beyond the right' because we've never been part of it. Those 'third position' nitwits are trying to be clever and shrewd, and their success among anarchists is only an indication of how desperately weak the 'third position' is and how stupid anarchists can be.

Mixed in with these straw man attacks, however, PS does include one tantalizing sentence, but unfortunately he follows it up with as little evidence as anywhere else in his tirade. He says: "...there are important libertarian and anti-statist strands within the left." I've heard that too, and I even know some people who call themselves anti-state or left communists who are easy to get along with, and with whom I have begun to collaborate on a more serious basis. But what strands and which theorists is PS talking about? We'll never know.

Getting Personal with a Straw Man

PS writes, "some of these post-leftists carry the ideal of rugged individualism to the point of self-parody, declaring that in the liberated future, nobody will ever have to associate with people they don't personally like. One of them summed up the post-left stance by saying simply 'I want to be

left alone,' free of all annoying attachments of social life, without other people interjecting their own opinions or offering critical comments on each other's behavior." Talk about a straw man—and I should know, because he's talking about me!

First of all, I don't call myself an individualist (rugged or not) because for most people both within and outside the anarchist scene, "individualist" is usually taken to mean someone who is in favor of private property, which I am not. Being suspicious of conformity masquerading behind calls for unity, I do tend to favor the individual in relation to group—but not necessarily at the expense of the group. I also recognize that there are plenty of times when there's no tension at all. If my preferences put me within the generally understood category of "individualist" I won't deny it, but this usage is ahistorical.

Second, what (if anything) does not wanting to associate with people whom one may not like have to do with individualism? Can PS not conceive of any left anarchist whose opinions are substantially similar to his own, but whose personality is so obnoxious that he would prefer never to have to be in the same room with her/him? Finding others unappealing may have something to do with individual taste, but it has precious little to do with any historically accurate understanding of individualism.

I suppose a quick reminder of a basic anarchist principle is on order here: voluntary association. PS's invocation of "free association," which "encourages exploration and mutual recognition, including critical contestation of what other people say and do" is quite a nice explanation of it. But, as usual, there's something missing. Not only does voluntary association mean that people have the ability to collaborate with others in a freely chosen manner, but it also means that people have the ability not to associate with others. Is PS implying that anarchists should be compelled to associate with anyone and everyone who wants to associate with them?

Next, we come to the issue of quotations. I did in fact say that part of my political vision could be summed up with the phrase "I want to be left alone." But PS puts my quote in a bizarre context. I wasn't trying to sum up "the post-left stance," but merely my personal preference in terms of not wanting to be told by some committee or other group what I must or mustn't do, and with whom (I seem to remember that my statement came quickly after the issue of not wanting to be forced to associate with someone I didn't like). This has nothing to

do with whether or not my vision is post-leftist or not. I consider such a sentiment to be a corollary of voluntary association. If PS's left anarchist vision includes a mandate not to leave me alone (what ever happened to the ability of a minority to secede?), then what makes his vision different from other non-anarchist leftist visions?

In terms of criticizing certain behavior, that depends. If some behavior is being

I'm all for cooperation with anyone who promotes and supports anti-statist and non-hierarchical self-organization...But the difficult questions to answer about "cooperation"...are what kind? and with whom? If PS's "cooperation" with...non-anarchists looks like it has all through the troubled history of the interactions between leftists and anarchists, then I will remain steadfastly suspicious of it, if not outright opposed to it.

engaged in by a self-proclaimed anarchist and goes against anarchist principles, then I'd consider it an anarchist responsibility to call that behavior into question. But that certainly doesn't—and shouldn't—apply to all behavior. Frivolous criticism is both unwanted and unwarranted; criticism from people one respects looks and sounds a lot different from criticism from people who are nosy and annoying. Is PS implying that anarchists have an open-ended imperative to interfere in the lives of others?

Finally we come to the really interesting part of his allegation, which is that "being left alone" really means that I want to be free of all social interactions. Thankfully for PS, he didn't put that part in quotation marks—because I have never said anything even remotely similar. This is his fantasy about what "being left alone" means to me. Being left alone is not the same as being isolated or disconnected, as just about anyone who understands English should understand. "Being left alone" does not equal being alone.

Rejecting Subjectivity or, The Straw Man Disappears in a Puff of Smoke

"Though the promoters of these notions strenuously deny it." PS here asserts that what he's about to allege is denied by his targets. Not only does he dismiss these

denials out of hand, he also doesn't care that they are made in the first place. Either way, PS is asserting that he knows best what's really going on, regardless of the fact that his targets (the promoters—whoever they are—and their notions) are fantasies. The refusal and rejection of what others say about themselves is one of the defining characteristics of authoritarians of all stripes. By stating that he knows what is objectively true for others, PS puts himself in league with other leftists, to be sure, but he also has thrown in his lot with just about every arrogant authoritarian know-it-all who ever imposed their power and ideology on anyone else.

I will say it clearly: my attitude does not reject "the very possibility of communal existence." I live with my partner and our dog; I co-facilitate a weekly anarchist study group; I co-organize an annual anarchist theory conference; I collaborate on the editorial decisions of this journal; I have had (and plan to continue to have) occupations where I have to engage regularly with plenty of people—almost none of them anarchists or radicals of any kind. And I almost always enjoy these diverse communal interactions.

Unless PS wishes to alter the definition of "communal" to fit his other fantasies, my life is overflowing with such things. I will also gladly declare the following: I do not believe that "all social structures are inherently oppressive." I don't know any anarchist who actually says or believes that. Does PS know of any anarchist who believes it—let alone anyone who has written it? We won't know because, once again, he doesn't tell us.

"[S]haring the world with other people means that sometimes we can't do exactly what we want to do, and sometimes we will need to cooperate with people we don't like very much." This is certainly true, and I would never deny it. But acknowledging that this is true and demanding that we must cooperate with people we don't like, or celebrating that we can't always do exactly what we would prefer, are two different things. PS, in his condemnation of my desire to be left alone, clearly implies that I should be forced to interact with people I dislike, and that I should also be forced to submit to the will of others. Negotiation is the key, based on respect and solidarity—neither of which can be imposed if they are to have any authentic meaning. There have been plenty of times in my life when I have interacted with people who annoy me, and there have been plenty of occasions when I have submitted to others' desires, but I'll be damned if I will allow myself to be forced to

do so by PS and people like him.

What PS refers to as a “false promise” I would call a “false position.” Who proclaims the desire for “absolute individual autonomy”? Nobody I know among anarchists. PS is correct that such a strange concoction is “indebted to those classical liberal principles that underwrite capitalist society.” What anarchist says anything else? Who are these phantoms who continue to swirl in and around the mind of PS?

He then touts “a positive conception of social freedom, a kind of freedom that flourishes in cooperation with others and demands equality as its necessary counterpart, a kind of freedom that is embodied in anti-authoritarian social structures and cooperative social practices.” Sounds great; I don’t deny the possibility for such things to occur. I have my own imagination to draw from to fill in the gaps in this scenario, but since they come out of my imagination, I can’t be certain about any of them or about their effectiveness in promoting freedom or equality. Maybe PS knows of some positive examples. But just as he never gives us any examples of people who hold the alleged positions he complains about, he also never gives us any hint about what these particular structures might be or look like, or what these particular practices might entail. We have nothing by which to assess the accuracy of his claims. This, like much of the rest of his complaint, is a dodge built on smoke and mirrors. Not only does he refuse to provide examples, but he also doesn’t bother to explain how such structures can be kept free of bureaucratism or coercive force to compel individuals and groups to accept them or cooperate with them. Nobody, apparently, is allowed to question any of the assumptions that lead him to these conclusions—he says it, he believes it, it is self-evident, and that’s it. Arguments based on common sense and self-evident conclusions aren’t—and shouldn’t be—convincing.

Guilt by (False) Association

In one of PS’s lowest moments, he slanders PLA as a haven for potential right-wingers. “...anarchist militants have sometimes found a comfortable home on the extreme right end of the spectrum. Although post-left anarchists often dismiss such cases as either isolated or irrelevant, the record of anarchist crossover into far right terrain is in fact remarkably long.” In all the reading and writing I’ve done on post-left anarchy, I have never mentioned this phenomenon, let alone tried to dismiss it. I have remarked on the unfortunate tendency of some Italian syndicalists in the 1920s and ‘30s to dive into fascist politics, but not within the context of talking about

the virtues of having a post-left analysis. The people he trots out (and it’s not even clear that Sorel or White were ever actually any kind of anarchist—I can’t say anything about Bartsch or Southgate since I’ve never heard of either of them) as examples of this unfortunate trend obviously found something lacking in anarchism, and I would argue that when they veered off into reactionary politics, they just as quickly stopped being anarchists. Is PS saying that these right-wingers retained their anarchist credentials after abandoning anarchism? What have their anarchist contemporaries said about that? Once again, we’ll never know.

What could be more interesting for the purposes of assessing the relevance of a post-left analysis would be tracking the “crossover” of anarchists into Leninism and Stalinism. We could begin with Robert Minor, Mao, Arshinov, Serge, and countless others—and I would wager that this list is at least equal to PS’s anarchist-to-rightist list. What would we learn from examining that particular phenomenon? About as much as from examining the right-wing “crossovers”: not much. People change; we cannot necessarily draw any conclusions about the strength or weakness of their later convictions by looking at those they held earlier. And it would definitely be odd to draw any conclusions at all about the political philosophies themselves based on the twists and turns of the allegiances of individual anarchists through time. If the majority of anarchists became either fascists or Leninists, then there might be something to say, but my sense is that the majority of anarchists remain self-identified anarchists—even if their understanding of anarchism changes. Perhaps the only realistic conclusion that can be made is that those anarchists who “crossed over” were always more authoritarian than either they or their erstwhile comrades were aware. And that, of course, has nothing to do with any kind of anarchism at all.

On Spots, Both Tight and Blind

“The project of creating such a society [of solidarity and self-management] will require cooperation with a broad range of oppositional movements, many of whom have solid grounds for refraining from a wholehearted embrace of anarchist doctrine.” I’m all for cooperation with anyone who promotes and supports anti-statist and non-hierarchical self-organization. Some who do are certainly not anarchists; why should anarchists expect otherwise, since anarchists can claim neither the invention nor sole proprietorship of such ideas. But the difficult questions to answer about “cooperation” (much like the similarly thorny issue of organization) are what kind? and with whom? If PS’s “coop-

eration” with (presumably leftist) non-anarchists looks like it has all through the troubled history of the interactions between leftists and anarchists, then I will remain steadfastly suspicious of it, if not outright opposed to it. This century and a half of “cooperation” has looked almost exclusively like the complete political subordination and active marginalization of anarchists, often with the requirement of the abandonment of anarchist principles, and occasionally including the dispensing of murderous rage. Such “cooperation” has definitely put anarchists in tight spots historically. PS complains about “the blind spots in the anarchist tradition”; his own particular blind spots have to do with this history of real anarchists.

In a revolutionary situation (if the history of such events is any indication), it will be necessary for people from many varieties of political traditions to collaborate with each other. If anarchists are interested in propelling revolutionary actions into the realm of authentic liberation and freedom, we must remain dedicated to our principles, come what may. This includes a refusal to cooperate with any state or government. Too often, politicians (that is, those who are interested in exercising some kind of power) disguised as revolutionaries or anarchists have managed to hoodwink other anarchists into abandoning our principles with the excuses of efficiency and/or expediency. Too often, these same people have steered anarchists into the most unlikely collaborations with statist of all leftist varieties in the name of Unity or fighting The Greater Enemy. Has the anarchist project of liberation and freedom come any closer to fruition as a result of these notable examples of cooperation? I am forced to wonder: are any of the 20th century examples cited earlier considered by PS to be among “the blind spots” that must be overcome or “the mistakes of the past” that anarchists must leave behind?

PS not only refuses to acknowledge any of these troubling aspects of his calls for “cooperation,” but he also refuses to acknowledge that post-left anarchy “is not a single entity.” He’s sad that PLAs don’t acknowledge the “extremely heterogeneous spectrum” of leftism, but he never offers any corrective examples—he only repeats that it exists. He never offers any convincing arguments for why anarchists should remain within the historically bankrupt tradition of state capitalism, welfare statism, and other forms of tinkering with the state.

This Is What Cooperation Looks Like

“Anarchists are working toward a society where everyone who wants to can partici-

pate in social affairs on an equal footing." This statement might be more convincing if this "equal footing" were accepted by left anarchists who maintain that all anarchists in order to be considered anarchists in the first place—must be leftists; those of us who identify to one degree or another with the PLA discourse should be approached on this "equal footing" or it's just a slogan with no meaning. Further, it might be more convincing if left anarchists were to demand that this equality be put into practice when cooperating with (or sucking up to) authoritarians instead of being content to be the utopian (and therefore easily dismissible) conscience of the left.

Cooperation between anarchists and non-anarchists might be more attractive to anarchists of all tendencies if the non-anarchists were to adapt themselves and their

methods to some of our principles for a change. Some typically anarchist tactics have been introduced to non-anarchists over the years, and have even been used by them on occasion. Non-hierarchical decision-making, mutual aid, direct action, collaborative groups based on political affinity—all these things have been discussed and used by various activists, from the anti-nuclear movement of the '70s to the contemporary anti-globalization movement. Many of these activists might be surprised—even horrified—to learn about the origins of these tactics within anarchist theory and practice. These tactics are used because they work well in many circumstances, but non-anarchists would certainly abandon them quickly whenever it appears that the success of an action or a campaign is at stake.

I, for one, would demand a stubborn adherence to, and thorough application of, these principles as a pre-condition for cooperation with anyone, including other anarchists; if leftists or other non-anarchists wish to join in a project with these parameters, then I'm happy to cooperate with them. In that case, radical, even revolutionary, cooperation will finally be implemented on anarchist terms. The history of the unfortunate attempts at unity between leftists and anarchists is littered with the corpses of anarchists. Plenty of anarchists have thought the false promises of unity were worth dying for—I'm more interested in the possibilities of non-hierarchical cooperation based on genuine solidarity. That's a future worth living for.

The Incredible Lameness of Left-Anarchism

by Jason McQuinn

When I was asked to contribute an updated essay on the post-left anarchist critique to the Institute for Anarchist Studies monthly web column, "Theory & Politics," I gladly accepted, even though the time I have available for writing is short these days. I accepted because I was surprised, but pleased, to learn that the heretofore rather ideologically narrow Institute for Anarchist Studies seemed to be opening itself up a bit more to the broader anarchist milieu by making such an invitation. I accepted because I have always been genuinely interested in communicating with a diverse audience, and welcomed the opportunity to present a quick critique of left-anarchism through the web publication of an organization which often seems to identify quite closely with the subject of my critique. And, finally, I accepted because I was told that immediately following my contribution Peter Staudenmaier would be writing in response "against post-left anarchism and for an anarchism that does not shed the left," and I have always been a partisan of intelligent, rational debate within the anarchist milieu. Anarchists are desperately in need of such debate—since intelligent and rational discussion has been incredibly short in supply—and I looked forward to having some of the important points in my essay carefully evaluated and rationally criticized.

An Evasion of Discussion

Unfortunately, the response that has appeared may be "against post-left anar-

chism," but careful evaluation and rational criticism play little part. Instead, readers of Staudenmaier's essay, "Anarchists in Wonderland," are presented with a strange combination of evasion, mystification, insinuation and petty complaints or smears. The straightforward engagement with my own and others' post-left arguments—the clear statement and explanation of differences I had hoped to read—is absent. Instead, the title of my editorial in the new Fall/Winter issue (#56) of *Anarchy* magazine, "The Evasion of Discussion in the Radical Milieu," now seems prescient, as if I knew beforehand the lack of response I would actually get in this particular debate.

One might expect that Staudenmaier would critically evaluate the most important aspects of the post-left anarchist critique in his essay, citing quotations from the most important essays on the subject, questioning their arguments and counterpoising his own. Instead he ignores most of what has been said and fails to address the most prominent post-left anarchist writers. Instead, he makes insinuations that are never backed up with evidence. He snipes at non-essential points as though they had some important meaning. He deliberately mystifies what has been clearly stated, whether through lack of ability to counter the arguments, or through an understanding that there are no convincing ways to counter them. And nowhere is he able to define what is positive about leftism and therefore worth preserving.

Vague Accusations with No Documentation

Staudenmaier opens his essay by calling the post-left anarchist critique "vague," despite the fact that several very clear statements (summarizing it from different perspectives) have appeared in *Anarchy*

magazine. These statements include Lawrence Jarach's "Don't let the Left(overs) Ruin your Appetite," Wolfi Landstreicher's "From Politics to Life," and my own "Rejecting the Reification of Revolt." Perhaps Staudenmaier hasn't read these essays, though they are easy enough to find. Perhaps he's only read the updated version of my "Rejecting the Reification of Revolt" that appeared in "Theory & Politics" last month under the title "Leaving the Left Behind." To give him the benefit of any doubt here I won't mention the arguments in other essays and I'll concentrate on his evasion of the very clear (and non-vague) arguments made in my own essay, since he can hardly claim to have missed it.

Staudenmaier goes on to allege that post-left anarchist critiques have "generated considerable debate among practically and theoretically engaged anarchists. In the course of these discussions, anarchists from a variety of backgrounds have posed a wide range of critical questions to the promoters of the post-left idea. Most of these questions have gone unanswered." What questions? Who didn't answer them? Why not? None of this is explained or it would become quite clear that this is just a gambit to mislead while making an unfounded accusation that most readers will never realize is absurd. Does it matter to Staudenmaier that every critical question posed to *Anarchy* magazine editors about post-left anarchism has been published and answered in its pages? Not at all. Aside from the few public presentations I've made about post-left anarchism in New Orleans, San Francisco and Lawrence, Kansas, the only other (semi-) public "discussions" I've come across on the subject have been on the web, where "free-for-all" would most often be a better description than "discussion." Are these what Staudenmaier is talking about? We

don't know because he doesn't say. Instead he continues by alleging that "not a few (questions) have provoked a remarkable level of vituperation from those who find the new post-left label appealing." What questions? What kind of responses did they receive? Was all the vituperation from one side? Was the vituperation even from anarchists? No hints at all are given. Just another empty, unverifiable accusation. If Staudenmaier won't tell us what the questions were and who made the allegedly "vituperative" remarks we'll remain forever in the dark about whatever it is he's talking about—as he apparently wants us to. This isn't an argument; it's just an attempted petty smear and it's not the most auspicious way to begin an essay. Would it be too much for Staudenmaier to publicly address his questions to *Anarchy* magazine? It wouldn't be hard, and *Anarchy* editors would certainly answer them!

Staudenmaier next jumps to a further unexplained allegation: "when the post-leftists cannot agree among themselves on even the most basic conceptual matters, such as what they mean by 'the left,' it is difficult for the rest of us to know exactly what it is we are being asked to believe." Who doesn't agree about what? Which post-leftists don't agree? About what basic conceptual matters? The only hint we get is that Staudenmaier thinks some anarchists making a post-left critique don't agree on a definition of "the left." Is this so important? Leftists talk about the left every day; do they all agree on what it is? Of course not. Does this make them necessarily incoherent? Is Staudenmaier incoherent if other leftists don't agree with his definition of "the left"—if he has one? Is it the duty of post-leftists to provide leftists with a definition of the left? This isn't an argument; it's just another lame excuse for evading discussion, akin to authoritarians complaining that they don't need to answer anarchist criticisms because not all anarchists agree on definitions of the state and government.

Muddling the Dispute

Staudenmaier next actually does mention, in passing, some of the critiques which I argue together constitute the core of the post-left critique. But rather than addressing them and criticizing them, as might be expected if there was really going to be a debate, he merely sidesteps them. Amazingly, he argues that "What all this might have to do with rejecting 'the left'^{Note 1} as such, however, remains rather obscure." To him, maybe, but I doubt to anyone else who actually reads my essay. He goes on to argue that "many of the core ideas of post-leftism trace their genealogy to left traditions themselves"! Excuse me! It's post-left anarchy. Would it make more sense

for post-left anarchist critiques to trace their genealogy somewhere else? Is it so strange that many critiques of the left should originate from people who at one time identified with it? I guess it is to Staudenmaier, since he wants to make a big deal of this. He goes on to actually cite one specific example and a couple oblique examples. He cites "The critique of organization" as being "deeply indebted to the work of Jacques Camatte." Well, yes, Camatte has made some important contributions to this critique (which began long ago amongst anarchists) and he was once a leftist. But just as clearly his critique of leftist organizations as "gangs" instantly made him a post-leftist in this respect. This proves nothing except the irrelevance of this tack of Staudenmaier's attempted argument. Staudenmaier goes on to argue that "the insistence on linking subjective psychological factors with broader social forces"—a strangely broad statement—"is presaged in the thinking of Cornelius Castoriadis." Maybe, but it is also presaged in the thinking of a lot of other people, including many anarchists! No one ever claimed that every leftist has no clue about anything! This is just another irrelevant pronouncement. The funniest citation, however, is the final one of the paragraph, in which Staudenmaier claims that "the whole re-orientation toward *domination* as our central critical term was theorized by the Frankfurt School and by Social Ecology long before it gained currency in the pages of *Anarchy*." While the Frankfurt School was an important influence on many *Anarchy* magazine contributors and editors (and though critiques of domination have been a commonplace of anarchist theory since Proudhon and Bakunin), "domination" is hardly the "central critical term" of the post-left critique, which makes the first part of this statement curious, to say the least. The more hilarious part is the attempt to put Bookchin's Social Ecology ideology in the same universe, much less the same league, as the Frankfurt School in this anyway irrelevant comment!

Next Staudenmaier says that "post-leftism adamantly rejects any accommodation with what it takes to be 'the left'." This (rejecting accommodation) could be said of any critique. What is being criticized is obviously not being "accommodated" but rejected in some important sense. Post-left anarchist critiques argue that anarchists can be most effective by standing up for ourselves as anarchists, and that it makes much more sense for anarchists to resist identification with leftism than to identify with it as a minor partner (for several crucial reasons that Staudenmaier is apparently incapable of criticizing directly). He goes on to complain that post-leftists don't speak about only one type of leftist, but all of them,

including "sectarian splinter groups and authoritarian demagogues," as well as "everybody from Bukharin to Bookchin." Guilty. The left is made up of a whole range of liberals, social democrats, socialists and communists of various self-descriptions. Sometimes post-leftists (just like leftists) will speak of liberal leftists, sometimes social democratic leftists, sometimes communist leftists, and sometimes all leftists together. There's no mystery about this. Staudenmaier goes on to say that he sees "the left as an extraordinarily variegated continuum of conflicting participants and perspectives." Once again, everyone making a post-left critique of whom I'm aware would agree with this, though Staudenmaier insinuates otherwise with no evidence. He continues by saying that the left is "not a monolithic entity that can be reduced to a few neat premises," even though nobody has ever argued that the left is a monolithic entity, nor that it can be reduced to *any* number of premises. Post-left critiques argue that all leftists share a certain (range of) approach to theory and practice that fundamentally differs from the anarchist approach. Staudenmaier's entire essay is an attempt to continuously avoid dealing with these differences.

Instead Staudenmaier's strategy seems to be an attempt to confuse readers as much as possible about what might ever constitute post-left critiques, and substitute a stream of undocumented accusations and petty insinuations for straight-forward and rational criticism. For example, he alleges that "Many anarchists drawn to the post-left label appear to live in a world in which all leftists are Leninists, except when they're liberals, and where the left as a whole is an ominous iceberg of power-worship threatening to sink a virtually Titanic-sized anarchist movement." Who are these "anarchists drawn to the post-left label" that he's speaking of? Once again, we'll never know if they exist anywhere besides Staudenmaier's imagination because he never even gives us a hint about who they are. Of course, many leftists *are* liberals, and many others *are* Leninists, and many leftists *have* worshipped power (think of the mass adulation for Lenin, Stalin and Mao, for just a few instances). But I have to say that I've never heard of any anarchists, even the most deluded, speak of a "Titanic-sized anarchist movement" currently existing. Where does Staudenmaier come up with these "many" alleged nutcases when none of us have ever heard from them? It's understandable that many leftists will feel extreme discomfort when their leftism is questioned and criticized. But that doesn't relieve leftists of the responsibility to confront the actual post-left anarchist critiques that have been made, rather than attempt-

ing to dodge them by making wild, unsubstantiated accusations.

The Internet Makes People Crazy

To further evade a direct debate over anything at all substantive in my essay (or other essays appearing in *Anarchy* magazine), Staudenmaier cites a web "debate" on "Anarchy after Leftism" accessible on www.infoshop.org (more of an incoherent free-for-all in my opinion) as including, he says, "Perhaps the most telling instances of post-left zeal." That sounds at least potentially correct; if you want to find some relatively incoherent, but zealous argumentation, the first place to look would be discussion sites on the internet! However, if you're honest about what you find you'll generally have to acknowledge that the incoherence and zealotry almost always go both ways. Peter claims (once again, without citing anyone so there's no way to prove it or disprove it without wading through dozens upon dozens of pages in an attempt to figure out what he's speaking about) that somewhere in this book-length free-for-all "debate" people sympathizing with at least some sorts of post-left anarchist critiques disagree on what is included under the concept of the left.

Just checking out the first few *defenders of the left* in the first fifty exchanges in this web discussion, I come across plenty of incoherent anarcho-leftism and plenty of irrational leftist zealotry, though I'm afraid to say that I don't find much of anything that could be called post-left anarchist incoherence or zealotry amidst these posts. First, in a silly self-contradiction, self-proclaimed anarchist and leftist Shawn Ewald says, "Being anarchists, we all agree that anarchism...is superior to any other ideology or methodology.... Therefore, to imply that anarchism is beyond or outside 'leftism' leads to a danger where anarchists might think, by being anarchists, that they 'themselves' are not only outside of 'leftism' but more evolved and more enlightened than the left as a whole—a la Marxist revolutionary vanguards." Apparently, for Shawn it's okay for anarchists to think anarchism is superior if it's conceived as a part of the left, but it's vanguardist for anarchists to think anarchism is superior if anarchism is conceived as being outside the left! Go figure. Score one for anarcho-leftist incoherence. But that's not all. Unfortunately, his posts are full of this kind of bizarre stuff. He next argues with regard to post-left anarchist criticism of the left (specifically from my editorial on the subject in *Anarchy* magazine) that "These are very classic leftist arguments, it should be pointed out. Many a newly formed Trot splinter group have made similar justifications for their actions. The implications are not pleasant to think

about." Of course, he doesn't give a single example of any Trotskyist splinter group ever in history that has actually made the same (or even roughly similar) arguments because none ever have! Anyone ever hear of post-left Trotskyism? Of course not. It doesn't exist. Score another point for left-anarchist irrationalism. It would be easy to continue in this vein, but I for one would rather not. What would it prove? The main point is not that there is a vast supply of incoherent arguments made by left-anarchists. The point is that if we are going to debate we need to face the strongest arguments of our opponents head-on and not run from the field of debate like Staudenmaier does looking for weak links in the realms of hearsay or internet comments from anonymous or pseudonymous posters whose identities may never be known for sure. Peter Staudenmaier, if there are coherent arguments for post-left critiques and you're afraid to face these arguments and offer arguments for alternative positions. Guess what? You've already lost the debate, because you've fled the field. If you want to win arguments, you need to quit running.

Nebulous Leftism

Staudenmaier complains again about post-leftist characterizations of leftists. As per his by now standard operating procedure, he makes numerous little allegations while never citing any particular sources. All we have is his not very convincing word that despite the supposedly "nebulous notion of 'the left' that animates the post-left critique," there are some very particular "extravagant denunciations" made by some unnamed people that annoy him very much. Looking at these claims we find that Staudenmaier alleges that some post-left anarchist somewhere in the world has argued that leftists "are all simultaneously totalitarian and reformists"! Not that there is anything unusual about totalitarian leftists reforming capitalism in various anti-revolutionary ways. (Just think about the Stalinists, Maoists and all the followers of the petty Communist Party dictators of the last half century or so.) But *who* in the world would say that *all* leftists are totalitarian reformists? Nobody I know. Probably nobody you know. Possibly nobody anyone knows, since Staudenmaier never deigns to enlighten us about who this person might be.

Next he complains that some post-leftist somewhere has argued that leftist "movements are disintegrating, trapped in inevitable decline." Does any anarchist besides Staudenmaier think differently since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Maoist ideological facade in China, the capitulation of social democratic regimes in the face of

neo-liberal imperatives, etc.? I'd be surprised to hear it! Staudenmaier further complains that another—or possibly the same—hapless post-left anarchist (whose name he won't reveal) has said that leftists' "mere presence threatens to overwhelm those anarchists foolish enough to ignore the urgent danger." This certainly sounds a bit exaggerated, though whether it is the allegedly post-left anarchist or Staudenmaier himself doing the exaggerating is impossible to tell given Staudenmaier's continuing refusal to document his sources. Be that as it may, the tens of thousands of anarchists imprisoned or murdered by leftists over the last ninety years might have nonetheless appreciated such an exaggerated warning if they had received one in time.

Finally, Staudenmaier actually addresses something I've said in my latest essay on the post-left anarchist critique. Well, sort of. He actually complains that I use the words "all" and "every," "always" and "everywhere," not to mention "the vast majority," and that using these words indicates a "lack of nuance"! Pardon me, but it only indicates a lack of nuance if the words in context exaggerate. Each of these words can also indicate the precisely correct nuance of argument as well. It depends upon the entire statements of which the words are merely parts, and it depends upon the contexts in which these entire statements appear. I've rarely seen a more bizarre argument than this one. Ignore the actual statements you want to criticize and instead attack the use of particular isolated words used in the statements! This is a brilliant innovation in evasion! Bravo! It's meaningless, but certainly it will be effective in distracting at least some readers' attentions from its absolute logical poverty.

Oops! Staudenmaier actually does follow this meaningless exercise in diversion with a quotation of an entire sentence from my essay addressing the difference between the strictly anarchist emphasis on self-organization and the leftist emphasis on integrating radicals into leftist political organizations: "For leftists, the emphasis is always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre^{Note 2} serving their goals." But then he for some reason neglects to mention any of the many, many exceptions to this statement that he surely thinks must exist. Let's see, surely we can come up with one or two? Of course, we'll have to eliminate all of the leftist political parties whose goals are precisely to convert independent radical activists into party cadre. Then we'll have to eliminate all of the leftist pre-party organizations, whose goals are really the same, though they don't have full-fledged party organizations yet. And then there are the leftist front groups, the party youth groups, the single-issue

campaign groups and even the small splinter groups. Well, maybe it isn't so easy to come up with an example of leftists whose emphasis is at least sometimes on encouraging genuine self-organization they have no intention of managing or dominating. I really can't think of any. Can you? But what about anarcho-leftists? Maybe we can come up with some anarcho-leftists who sometimes encourage self-organization? But then is the encouragement of self-organization the result of the anarcho- or the leftist influence? I think we can all guess the real answer to that question. So maybe the reason that Staudenmaier doesn't provide us with a counterexample to disprove the statement of mine he quotes is that there really aren't any. Let's give him another chance, though. Peter Staudenmaier, please give us all an example of a self-defined leftist group that consistently emphasizes genuine self-organization with no attempts at manipulation, no attempts to infiltrate or control, no hidden leaderships, no ideological agendas, etc. If you can come up with even one, I promise to amend my statement above to read: "For leftists, the emphasis is *almost* always on recruiting to their organizations, so that you can adopt the role of a cadre serving their goals."

Staudenmaier's Leftist Fantasies

Staudenmaier claims that "the post-left image of the left...is frequently wrong on particulars," citing as an example my mention that "'the critique of everyday life' is 'largely incompatible' with 'most of the New Left of the 60s and 70s.'" Amazingly enough, Staudenmaier rousingly claims that "In Germany, France, and North America, at the very least, large segments of the New Left enthusiastically embraced the critique of everyday life...." Of course, he once again gives zero examples. Do I detect a pattern developing? Who were these "large segments of the New Left"? I sure don't recall any New Left socialist or communist groups, Trotskyist splinter groups, or Maoist groupuscules that "enthusiastically embraced the critique of everyday life." The Situationist International, of course, encouraged this critique, but its members were contemptuous of the left, so it can't count here. In the U.S. the SDS, the Progressive Labor Party, the Weatherman organization, the Socialist Workers Party, the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords and other major New Left groups would have rejected the critique of everyday life, if they had ever heard of it. Sure, there were amorphous anti-authoritarian currents throughout the New Left, including a few which heeded the

S.I.'s call for a critique of everyday life. But the vast majority of the New Left groups had no use for this essentially anarchistic turn of critique away from the exploitation of labor. (Or, for the more liberal and pacifist New Leftists, away from the confrontation of moral conscience with the establishment; and for the feminists, civil rights groups and black nationalists, away from the reifications of identity politics.)

The New Left I lived through was thoroughly leftist. The anarchists were almost completely invisible. Almost nobody at the time ever talked about the critique of organizational fetishism, the critique of everyday life, the critique of the state, the critique of ideology (except in the least perceptive Marxist senses), the critique of technological fetishism...or the critique of civilization.

Staudenmaier clarifies his claim by adding that: "the profoundly anti-authoritarian upsurge of that era...owed much of its vigor and inclusiveness to this re-orientation toward everyday relationships." However, while it may be true that there was a sort of generalized New Left "re-orientation towards everyday relationships," this hardly constituted any sort of genuine critique of everyday life. Most of the "re-orientation towards everyday relationships" during the time was fraught with ideological baggage that precisely prevented the development of such a critique.

There were all kinds of incoherent amalgamations floating around, including aspects of drug culture, feminism, Maoism, anarchism, sexual liberation, drop-out culture, etc. But they were just that—incoherent amalgamations—and not coherent critiques of everyday life in any way comparable to that of Raoul Vaneigem's critique in his *Revolution of Everyday Life*. This type of coherent critique would have immediately called into question the rampant incoherence involved in the reformism, moralism, identity politics, workerism and authoritarianism of New Left organizations at the time. As for Henri LeFebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life* series, it was almost unknown and simply irrelevant in North America at the time (where it was yet to be translated, anyway), while Richard Gombin's otherwise interesting book remains most remarkable

for its highly idiosyncratic and bizarre definition of leftism, under which the Situationist International was categorized as leftist despite its public disdain for the left in its own terms (for just one example, speaking of "the hierarchical ideology of leftism" in "Theses on the Situationist International and its Time" by Guy Debord & Gianfranco Sanguinetti).^{Note 3}

Staudenmaier goes on to argue that: "the concrete practice of countless New Leftists was explicitly predicated on a forceful rejection of precisely those values which McQuinn takes to be constitutive of the left as such." As usual he provides no examples. Funny, I never noticed these "countless" post-left anarchists at the time. Where were these "countless" people? Why don't they appear in any history of the New Left, except, possibly, in cases of a few tiny groups like the Diggers or the Motherfuckers? The New Left I lived through was thoroughly leftist. The anarchists were almost completely invisible. Almost nobody at the time ever talked about the critique of organizational fetishism, the critique of everyday life, the critique of the state, the critique of ideology (except in the least perceptive Marxist senses), the critique of technological fetishism (beyond superficial environmentalist concerns), or the critique of civilization. Even the few anarchists were oblivious to most of this. If Staudenmaier can provide any evidence I'd be happy to concede that the times were far more radical than I realized. But in the complete absence of any evidence for his amazing fantasies, I'll have to stick with the 60s and 70s I saw with my own eyes.

Staudenmaier further claims that: "The actual history of the left includes numerous instances when such innovative critical approaches emerged to contest the conformism and repressiveness of the cadre model." I bet you can guess by now that he doesn't give even one example of what he's talking about. What "numerous...innovative and critical approaches" advanced the model of anti-authoritarian, anti-statist self-organization outside of the anarchist milieu? Looking at the historical record there's not much evidence for any. Of course, if Staudenmaier actually means that there were really a few timid criticisms made of the excesses of leftist organizational fetishism (let's not be quite so rigid, let's allow the common people to contribute ideas once in awhile, let's vote on our party policies) this isn't the same thing at all as what post-left anarchists argue, and it would be absurd to think it was.

Staudenmaier does make one good,

though entirely irrelevant, point in all this. He argues: "some leftists have been thoughtful and resolute allies of anarchism at crucial junctures in our history." But nobody has claimed otherwise. A few exceptional leftists—like George Orwell—had some anarchist sympathies, despite their abhorrence for anarchist indiscipline, subversion and bad manners. Daniel Guérin is another example. Nobody has claimed that all leftists are incapable of working with anarchists, just that non-anarchist leftists have a significantly different theory and practice than anarchists that is basically incompatible with anarchy. This should really be no surprise. They're just not anarchists.

Individualist Delusions and Myopic Autonomy

We get to the heart of one of the biggest differences between anarchism and leftism when we assess the place of individuals in communities and in social change. Anarchists (at least, those anarchists whose anarchism is stronger than their leftism) generally argue that free individuals and free communities cannot be coerced into existence. Leftists argue otherwise. Anarchists contend that individuals and communities should be autonomous (self-governing, self-directing) rather than dependent upon government and the forced imposition of heteronomous decisions. Leftists, for the most part, can hardly conceive that people free to make their own decisions might ever be socially-conscious, much less able to carry out a social revolution in the right situation. (This attitude is exemplified by the infamous Leninist insistence that workers are only capable of "trade-union consciousness," and the corresponding delusion that only the Leninist party can be consistently revolutionary.) In fact, for most socialist and communist leftists (and, unfortunately, also for many left-anarchists) individualism seems to be nothing but a dirty word.

The difference between anarchism and leftism here is the difference between a specific meaning of the word "individualism"^{Note 4} and a specific meaning of the word "collectivism."^{Note 5} Anarchists are all individualists in the narrow and specific sense of "...favoring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control." (*New Oxford American Dictionary*) Leftists are collectivists in the specific and narrow sense of favoring "...social organization in which the individual is seen as being subordinate to a social collectivity such as a state, a nation, a race, or a social class." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*) Left anarchists of various types make a range of uneasy compromises between these two positions—some closer

to anarchism, some closer to leftism.^{Note 6} This particular difference between anarchism and leftism has nothing to do with the various ideologies of individualism or of individualist anarchism, none of which have a significant presence within the contemporary anarchist milieu, anyway. Yet Staudenmaier objects to my claim that "The anarchist idea has an indelibly individualist foundation," by bringing up the largely irrelevant history of individualist anarchists despite the fact that in "Leaving the Left Behind" I nowhere refer to this history and nowhere defend any ideological individualism in any form.^{Note 7} This is another diversionary tactic. Specifically, it is a straightforward use of the straw-man fallacy, in which Staudenmaier argues with a position he's constructed out of thin air, rather than arguing with the position that's actually been put forth. To be overly fair, this is a fairly common tactic used by all sorts of unscrupulous leftists to attack anyone interested in individual freedom, which is seen by most leftists as at best only a bourgeois conceit. This is why almost all leftists with any remaining semblance of opposition to capitalism repeatedly denounce anarchism as merely a form of "bourgeois individualism" or "petty-bourgeois individualism" or "lumpen individualism." But no matter how common it is the construction of straw-man arguments serves primarily to reveal the extreme weakness of the positions of those making them. Straw men are attacked precisely because leftists are unable to counter the actual arguments.

At this point Staudenmaier explains to dubious readers that the "insistence on individual autonomy" is "myopic." Presumably this means that more far-seeing anarchists will renounce their individual autonomy (self-direction) in favor of an organizational ideology and/or organizational directives and/or democratic majority decisions made somewhere. If there is another explanation I'd really like to hear it. After this his argument reverts to the www.infoshop.org "Anarchy after Leftism" web discussion. He complains that "several spokespeople for post-left positions emphatically declared their opposition to egalitarianism." No context or definitions are given by Staudenmaier, though there is a long history of anarchist critiques of egalitarian ideologies which aim to level society by force. (Bakunin's eloquent dictum, "socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality" comes quickly to mind.) Staudenmaier further claims that "a number" of these people "claimed to reject social institutions per se" though once again refusing to explain or contextualize these comments. Who are these "spokespeople" and what did they actually say? Staudenmaier uses these alleged comments to argue that "Though the

promoters of these notions strenuously deny it, what this attitude amounts to is a rejection of the very possibility of communal existence." But if they so "strenuously deny" this, couldn't it be that Staudenmaier either misunderstands their positions, or is taking liberties with his description of them? We don't know since he once again refuses to quote or at least cite the precise location of these alleged comments.

But, again, what is the point of all this? Staudenmaier continues to evade the careful critiques that have appeared in *Anarchy* magazine and in the IAS "Theory & Politics" web column by running away to caricature and denounce some very likely off-hand comments that most people will never see, that nobody can check, and whose importance to anything is far less than clear.

Abstract and Indeterminate Evasions

Staudenmaier gets even more clever in his tactics of evasion when he actually does finally quote a very short, direct comment from the www.infoshop.org "Anarchy after Leftism" web discussion site: "I want to be left alone." Although he doesn't indicate where in the vast discussion this comment was made or who has made it, I actually recall reading it, and the fact that he quotes it allows anyone with access to the internet to search the infoshop.org discussion site for the comment...and discover immediately that it is taken out of context and completely falsified by Staudenmaier's deliberate misinterpretation of it to mean "free of all the annoying attachments of social life, without other people interjecting their own opinions or offering critical comments on each other's behavior." But this complete falsification doesn't keep Staudenmaier from sermonizing about things nobody would disagree with in the first place. He actually condescends to argue that "liberatory forms of social interaction sometimes require us to challenge each other's opinions and actions rather than just accepting them....[blah, blah, blah.]" Oh my, please tell us it's not so!

But this insipidly intentional misunderstanding by Staudenmaier gets even worse. As with any effective sermonizing a devil must be produced, which in this case is a devious serpent he calls "post-left repressive tolerance," whose "deeper implications" he divines to be "an invitation to intolerance and parochialism." My, my, my. So much to divine from so little (manufactured) evidence! Let's be crystal clear. Post-left anarchist critiques are based upon the careful study of world history, including the history of the left. They are critiques of well over a hundred years of the whole range of actual, sustained leftist theories and practices, with all their gory, too-often totalitarian or

just-plain brutal results. Post-left anarchist critiques do not call for refusing to learn from history or from the vast experiences of peoples around the world in revolt. On the contrary, post-left critiques call for examining and seeking to understand every significant form of contestation in which people engage around the world, in every level of society and in every sphere of life. Constructing a mythical "post-left repressive tolerance" from an out-of-context quote that "I want to be left alone" is simply a breathtaking exercise in bad faith.

Moving on from this, Staudenmaier hesitates for not even a second before launching a different—but nearly as breathtaking—evasion, this time seeking to minimize into nonexistence the criticisms of leftism (most of which it is now clear he dare not ever explicitly acknowledge in any detail) that I make in "Leaving the Left Behind." He alleges that I focus my attention "on the manifold shortcomings of contemporary radical politics." (Who would have guessed?) And that I charge that "leftists have incomplete, self-contradictory theories about capitalism and social change." But he acknowledges this focus and this charge only in order to dismiss them absolutely from either importance or consideration by saying simply, "But we all have these." Okay! We all have incomplete, self-contradictory theories. Who cares if some lead to dictatorship and others lead to incoherence, if some lead to support for repression and others lead to support for all forms of contestation? We're all in the same leftist boat according to Staudenmaier, and I shouldn't be rocking it. No matter that I have made detailed and highly specific criticisms of leftism in my essay. He argues that "Capitalism is a contradictory system. Revolutionary social change is an incomplete process. Working through these contradictions requires close attention to the concrete determinants of currently prevalent modes of domination and hierarchy, so that we can create forms of resistance adequate to the particular demands of our specific historical and social situation." Wow. I guess that means as long as we don't raise any criticisms of the left, then, everything will be hunky-dory! As long as we don't do anything rash like speaking of "a commitment to 'general social revolt,'" which according to Staudenmaier would "promote the kind of false generalism that is already rife in North American anarchist circles," we'll weather the storm and all will be well. Staudenmaier says it's alright if we "learn from the civil rights struggle...or the strategies pioneered by peasant revolts in the global south" as long as we don't generalize too much or criticize the role of the left in these contestations. Worst of all, anarchists should never even think it is possible that

the anarchist milieu could "stand on its own and bow to no other movements." The direct implication is that unless it subordinates itself to the left the anarchist movement "will be ill equipped to engage in this sort of learning process." The only thing never explained is what the hell subordinating anarchism to leftism has to do with any of this at all—except in his own mind? In this case, too much abstract and indeterminate evasiveness makes for absolute incoherence.

The Obligatory Fascist Smear

Given the history of Staudenmaier's concerns with the likelihood that any forms of critical theory and practice except his own are liable to be co-opted by fascism, it is unsurprising that he raises the specter of an alleged post-left anarchist susceptibility to the allures of this bogeyman. His evidence? He claims that "A few post-left anarchists go so far as to extol the right wing tendencies within anarchism as a healthy corrective to the grave dangers of social equality and the dastardly connivance of anarchists and power-mad leftists." Wow. I'd love to see the names of these "post-left anarchists," along with the wild quotations in prominent places that must have led to Staudenmaier's unconstrained paraphrasing! Oh, I almost forgot, that's not how Staudenmaier operates. But couldn't we at least see some sort of citations allowing us to find the origin of his accusations? Not likely. Classified leftist information, I suppose. Not that it's impossible for people to say such things (one assumes on the anonymous internet...since they wouldn't likely get into print anywhere). But given a lack of citation or direct quotation we're once again left entirely in the dark, just as Staudenmaier apparently wants us to be. Were these real comments? If so were they actually made by anarchists or by people posing as post-leftists? (The latter is always possible in the almost completely anonymous and pseudonymous world of internet discussion free-for-all where it's impossible to know who is really speaking, and where it's fully possible to see people post the most insane comments under your own name.)

What these nasty, unverifiable allegations by Staudenmaier evade is the incredibly huge, dirty secret that in historical actuality (as opposed to leftist fantasy), it was ex-leftists in immense numbers who helped populate the fascist movements (which, of course, is not to belittle the many leftists who never abandoned the anti-fascist struggle during this time). It certainly wasn't a few insignificant anarchist critics of the left who helped push fascism into power. And the reason for the easy conversion of masses of leftists to fascist and Nazi causes was that

leftism and fascism are similar in so many more ways than anarchism and fascism are. National socialism (one form of fascism) substitutes the nation as the collectivist focus, while class-struggle socialism and syndicalism center on class as the collectivist focus around which life is to be subordinated. Red Fascism (Bolshevism) is a form of national socialism paradoxically built on an ideology of class struggle. Left anarchists must deal with this dirty history of the left straightforwardly if they want to be taken seriously. Making smears based on unverifiable allegations, while ignoring the bulk of actual history, does nothing to enhance the reputation of left anarchism.

For a Rational Discussion of Anarchism and the Left

Seldom have I seen a less direct and more evasive response to anything in the anarchist milieu than Staudenmaier's "Anarchists in Wonderland." But putting it behind us, where does that leave us? Certainly no wiser about any intelligent, rational arguments against post-left critiques, though I, for one, am certain that such arguments can be made and would welcome them. To repeat the recommendations in the editorial of the new *Anarchy* magazine issue might be the best place to start. (See www.anarchy-mag.org for the entire editorial.)

"1) Always attack the comments made rather than the author(s). This is accomplished by avoiding a number of things, and by accomplishing one simple goal. Avoid making spurious, irrelevant, or patently false accusations by sticking resolutely to actual points made in the words and context in which the author(s) you want to criticize has actually made them! If you can't quote the author(s) (without distorting the context) and address your criticisms directly to the quoted words, then simply don't comment! (Here I guess I should add that citations of some sort should be made when referencing lengthy source documents so that readers can find what you are talking about to check on its context and meaning themselves.)

"2) Refuse straw man arguments. Challenge the actual meaning of the words you quote by either accepting the definitions used by the author you want to criticize, or by making it clear why you think the author's definitions are so inadequate as to require different definitions. If you can't find any place where an author actually has said something you want to criticize, don't argue that she or he has said it, or would agree with it, or secretly believes it. If one person makes a particular statement, this does not mean that all people you may want to group with that

person agree with that statement. If you want to draw some logical conclusions from the author's statements in order to criticize them (or to show that the statements lead to absurd conclusions), then first run your alleged logical conclusions by several people to make sure that your conclusions are more solid than idiosyncratic, and then be sure to acknowledge that it is your conclusions that are absurd, and not the author's.

"Above all, read any texts you want to criticize with extreme care. Avoid superficial readings and always make a conscientious effort to understand what is at stake. If there is something you don't understand, then simply ask about it before you criticize it."

Beyond these points we can also learn from Staudenmaier's peculiar odyssey into his own little wonderland:

1) Argue with your opponents strongest positions. If you want to criticize Marxism, for example, don't focus primarily on the words of Stalin's barber. If you want to criticize anarchism, don't settle for a criticism of Proudhon's patriarchal attitudes. Going after irrelevant targets of opportunity is a show of weakness, never strength.

2) Try a little turnabout. Would your arguments make sense to you if someone else turned them on you in some form? If not, don't use them.

3) Keep your abstractions grounded with convincing details, examples, quotations and documentation. Anyone can construct abstract platitudes. It's what the abstractions mean for everyday practice that makes any real difference to people.

Notes

1) According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary* "left wing" is defined as "the liberal, socialist, or radical section of a political party or system. [with reference to the National Assembly in France (1789-91), where the nobles sat to the president's right and the commons to the left]." "Left" or "the left" is similarly defined as "a group or party favoring liberal, socialist, or radical views." In common usage in North America the left includes liberals, socialists, communists and a few other lesser movements (or remnants of movements, like the Single-Taxers, Distributivists or Mutualists). Anarchists are sometimes included and sometimes not, when they are acknowledged by people to exist at all.

For an interesting diagram representing the U.S. left from the perspective of U.S. social democrats see the "Left-Wing Lingo, Ideologies and History" web site: <http://www.uhuh.com/nwo/communism/leftling.htm#history>

Notably, on this web site anarchists are almost entirely absent from the picture, with only minor references to "the anarchist wing of the Left Green Network (LGN), which is the

moribund, left wing of the Greens USA, associated with Murray Bookchin and the Institute for Social Ecology," and the *Fifth Estate* (described as "eco-anarchist").

2) According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary* "cadre" is defined as "a small group of people specially trained for a particular purpose or profession" or "a group of activists in a communist or other revolutionary organization." And similarly, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* "cadre" is defined as "a nucleus or core group especially of trained personnel able to assume control and to train others," or, "a cell of indoctrinated leaders active in promoting the interests of a revolutionary party." I use the word "cadre" in the sense of a person or people assimilated into organizations whose ideologies they have learned and reproduce, and to whose goals they subordinate their own thinking and activities. Cadre organizations are quite different from anarchist organizations, which are based upon critical self-theory, self-activity and self-organization—preserving individual and small group autonomy and refusing to surrender sovereignty to any group, leadership or temporary majority.

3) The fact that Richard Gombin employs an idiosyncratic definition of "leftism" doesn't, however, lessen the importance of his book as a study of some of the most important French currents which attempted to transcend leftism as it is more commonly defined, which is why C.A.L. Press has long distributed it. In his book Gombin defines "...leftism as that segment of the revolutionary movement which offers, or hopes to offer, a radical alternative to Marxism-Leninism as a theory of the labour movement and its development." (*The Origins of Modern Leftism*, p.17) This extremely narrow definition (Gombin is aware it is unusual, and calls it a "technical" definition as opposed to what he calls "the generally accepted, journalist's" definition) would leave out most of what is commonly considered the left in North America, and is obviously not what either post-left anarchists or Staudenmaier have in mind in use of the term. Staudenmaier's reference to this book and to Gombin's analysis is obviously meant to mystify, since he expects that most people reading his essay will not be familiar with it, and he certainly has no intention of putting it in any sort of intelligent context.

4) According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary* "individualism" is defined as "the habit or principle of being independent and self-reliant." While the secondary definition is "a social theory favoring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control." The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "individualism" as "1a. Belief in the primary importance of the individual and in the virtues of self-reliance and personal independence. b. Acts or an act based on this belief. 2a. A doctrine advocating freedom from government regulation in the pursuit of a person's economic goals. b. A doctrine holding that the interests of the individual should take precedence over the

interests of the state or social group. 3a. The quality of being an individual; individuality." And according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "individualism" is "political and social philosophy that places high value on the freedom of the individual and generally stresses the self-directed, self-contained, and comparatively unrestrained individual."

5) According to the *New Oxford American Dictionary* "collectivism" is defined as "the practice or principle of giving a group priority over each individual in it." This is the way most people in the U.S. will understand the term. The secondary definition given, one not used in this essay (nor in "Leaving the Left Behind"), is "the theory and practice of the ownership of land and the means of production by the people or the state." According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* "collectivism" is "any of several types of social organization in which the individual is seen as being subordinate to a social collectivity such as a state, a nation, a race, or a social class."

6) Every major anarchist theorist—Godwin, Stirner, Proudhon, Bakunin, Guillaume, Kropotkin, Faure, Malatesta—has strongly defended the goals of individual freedom and self-realization in ways both absent from and incompatible with (non-anarchist) leftism. Only the most rabidly leftist of anarchists agree with the bulk of left opinion that even Bakunin or Kropotkin or Malatesta must be denounced for their lapses into excessive "individualism."

7) Perhaps I should have made it absolutely clear that not only does the anarchist idea have an indelibly individualist foundation, but that the actual history of anarchist milieus and movements has been overwhelmingly socialist or communist as well. I have to admit that this seems so incredibly self-evident to me that I never would have imagined Staudenmaier might in his wildest imagination attempt to claim or imply I thought otherwise! As anyone who has read *Anarchy* magazine for the last twenty years might realize, I've never propounded an ideology of individualist anarchism, though I have consistently championed the importance of Max Stirner's (widely misunderstood) phenomenological analyses of subjectivity and ideology for social revolutionary anarchist theory and practice. (Stirner, by the way, would have been the first to deny the label of "individualist anarchist" that so many wish to pin on him.) I've long considered myself an anti-ideological anarchist first and foremost—which means that I am both an individualist and communist in the nonideological meanings of these terms. Anyone attempting to construct my anti-political theoretical and practical positions as being exclusively (not to mention, ideologically) "individualist" must first selectively ignore, obscure or deny at least nine-tenths of what I have written over the last twenty years or so, and then explain how the other decontextualized ten percent still can make any sense. In other words, this would be a task of blatant falsification (not that other Social Ecologists haven't already proven their adeptness at this kind of task).

Challenge Accepted: Post-Leftism's Rejection of the Left as a Whole

by Peter Staudenmaier

Critique is a difficult thing to engage in, whether you're in the role of the critic or of the criticized. Part of the challenge involves trying to sort out which ideas are promising enough that they can be worked on and refined in a rewarding way, and then figuring out how to make these ideas more sensible and useful for our practical efforts. That sort of immanent critique is what I tried to offer with my skeptical appraisal of post-left anarchism. In my original response to Jason McQuinn's article "Post-Left Anarchy: Leaving the Left Behind," I wrote that this much-needed process of theoretical and practical refinement would be more effective if post-left adherents could bring themselves to engage with the criticisms put forward by other anarchists. McQuinn's intemperate reply indicates that these words went unheeded. Complaining that my criticisms of his argument were not the criticisms he hoped for rather misses the point.

In some respects, the ugly tone this debate always seems to take may have to do with fundamentally contrary assumptions about the function of critique itself. Much of McQuinn's indignation appears to stem from disappointment that I failed to write another essay altogether. Thus rather than responding to the criticisms I did offer, he presents a litany of themes I did not address. This strikes me as an odd way to approach the issue; the list of topics on which I have nothing to say is quite long, and it is difficult to see how such a method will clarify the core issues at stake. Perhaps it is all based on a misunderstanding: my essay was not a comprehensive review of McQuinn's various beliefs, or of the last several volumes of *Anarchy Magazine*; it was a direct response to McQuinn's article, particularly the parts of that article that I found unpersuasive and flawed. There is nothing evasive about this form of critique.

At times McQuinn's musings on "The Incredible Lameness of Left Anarchism" read like an supplement to my own essay. After I pointed out the chronic levels of vagueness and vituperation that so frequently afflict post-left arguments, McQuinn provides yet more vagueness and amplified vituperation. After I scolded post-leftists for pointless caricatures of the history of the

left, McQuinn offers another reductionist parody of the New Left, which in his eyes apparently consisted primarily of Old Left cadre parties. Perhaps the oddest aspect of McQuinn's reply is his insistence that I neglected to provide any source for the views of other post-left enthusiasts. I did, of course, provide this source, along with a link to it, and explained this procedure clearly in my essay. The tension between these vernacular expressions of post-leftism and McQuinn's own more theoretical variety forms a major component of my analysis.

All in all, the post-left perspective seems even less cogent in the wake of McQuinn's splenetic recapitulation. Anarchists who are wondering what all the fuss is about have yet to receive clear answers, much less compelling ones. Aside from veering between casual disavowal and vehement reaffirmation of the same positions he staked out in his initial article, McQuinn still hasn't faced the basic logical conundrum at the heart of his stance: Why would the sordid record of some parts of the left require an undifferentiated rejection of the left as a whole? Answering this straightforward question would go a long way toward making our disagreements less frenzied and more relevant to anarchist practice today.

Worthwhile Debate Requires Communication: Evasion and Denial Don't Cut It

by Jason McQuinn

Critique is, indeed, apparently "a difficult thing to engage in" for Peter Staudenmaier, as he says in his latest attempt at evasion of debate, "Challenge Accepted: Post-Leftism's Rejection of the Left as a Whole." How else to explain his lack of ability to respond directly to the questions, challenges and critiques in "The Incredible Lameness of Left-Anarchism"? Staudenmaier pleads for our indulgence of his evasions on the basis that he was attempting an "immanent critique" of "post-left anarchism." However, in order to develop an immanent critique it is necessary to explore and understand what is meant to be criticized, rather than engaging in evasion, mystification, insinuation and petty smears.

Immanent critique is a method of drawing out tendencies from within the object of analysis (such as a theory or movement or historical process) which contradict to some degree its dominant meaning(s) or direc-

tion. In order to engage in an immanent critique of another critique—like, for example, the post-left anarchist critique—one must be able to *at the least* reproduce the major arguments of the major proponents of the critique, and discover *from within those arguments* contradictory elements that can be developed into critical themes which undermine these major arguments. Staudenmaier, undoubtedly knows all this in principle. However, in practice he doesn't seem to be able to get beyond the level of evasion, mystification, insinuation and petty smears. Why is this? We can only guess that it is because the post-left anarchist critique is too much for him to deal with and that he is afraid to face the actual arguments in order to criticize them in *any* effective fashion, whether straightforwardly or immanently.

Let's look quickly at the latest round of evasions.

First, Staudenmaier once again alleges that "post-left adherents" have not "engage(d) with the criticisms put forward by other anarchists." However, he once again doesn't tell us what these mysterious criticisms *are*, despite the fact that I have already asked him to do exactly that. Again, Peter, what are the criticisms that you want me to engage? I'd be happy to do so if only you'd tell us what they are! Unlike you, I

won't hide from or attempt to ignore any criticisms.

Second, Staudenmaier alleges that "rather than responding to the criticisms [Staudenmaier] did offer, [McQuinn] presents a litany of themes [Staudenmaier] did not address." Actually, as anyone who reads "The Incredible Lameness of Left-Anarchism" will quickly see, I *did* respond to almost every one of Staudenmaier's criticisms, but he now refuses to admit it and answer my responses in any way! Why is this?

Third, Staudenmaier once again reverts to his vacuous complaint about "chronic levels of vagueness and vituperation that so frequently afflict post-left arguments." He does this, once again, as per his standard operating procedures in "Anarchists in Wonderland," without ever directly quoting any example of this supposed "vagueness" or "vituperation" from any identifiable anarchist engaged in the post-left critique. I won't stoop to this level of non-argument, but if anyone wanted to do so it would be just as easy to say that left-anarchism suffers from "chronic levels of vagueness and vituperation," and it would be just as meaningless an exercise in evasion of genuine debate over actual positions. Peter, can't we at least please skip this level of petty smears?

Fourth, once again, instead of at last

getting some sort of intelligible citations so that the alleged (apparently anonymous?) “post-left” writings Staudenmaier criticized in “Anarchists in Wonderland” could be found (so that the alleged “post-leftist anarchists” behind them could be identified and the actual contexts of their writing be examined), he once again refuses to provide them while claiming that an internet address for a book-length discussion by a large group of people is adequate citation! What planet are you on, Peter? If you can only give us an internet address, with no names and no way to find the alleged comments you’re so intent on claiming are so incredibly important, what have you got to hide from us?

Fifth, Staudenmaier alleges (with absolutely no attempt at justifying himself) that I “offer[ed] another reductionist parody of the New Left” in my essay “The Incredible Lameness of Left-Anarchism.” Here is what I really said about the New Left:

“Staudenmaier claims that ‘the post-left image of the left...is frequently wrong on particulars,’ citing as an example my mention that “the critique of everyday life” is “largely incompatible” with “most of the New Left of the 60s and 70s.” Amazingly enough, Staudenmaier rousingly claims that ‘In Germany, France, and North America, at the very least, large segments of the New Left enthusiastically embraced the critique of everyday life....’ Of course, he once again gives zero examples. Do I detect a pattern developing? Who were these ‘large segments of the New Left’?

“I sure don’t recall any New Left socialist or communist groups, Trotskyist splinter groups, or Maoist groupuscles that ‘enthusiastically embraced the critique of everyday life.’ The Situationist International, of course, encouraged this critique, but its members were contemptuous of the left, so it can’t count here. In the U.S. the SDS, the Progressive Labor Party, the Weatherman organization, the Socialist Workers Party, the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords and other major New Left groups would have rejected the critique of everyday life, if they had ever heard of it. Sure, there were amorphous anti-authoritarian currents throughout the New Left, including a few which heeded the S.I.’s call for a critique of everyday life. But the vast majority of the New Left groups had no use for this essentially anarchistic turn of critique away from the exploitation of labor. (Or, for the more liberal and pacifist New Leftists, away from the confrontation of

moral conscience with the establishment; and for the feminists, civil rights groups and black nationalists, away from the reifications of identity politics.)

“Staudenmaier clarifies his claim by adding that: ‘the profoundly anti-authoritarian upsurge of that era...owed much of its vigor and inclusiveness to this re-orientation toward everyday relationships.’ However, while it may be true that

In order to engage in an immanent critique of another critique—like, for example, the post-left anarchist critique—one must be able to at the least reproduce the major arguments of the major proponents of the critique, and discover from within those arguments contradictory elements that can be developed into critical themes which undermine these major arguments.

there was a sort of generalized New Left ‘re-orientation towards everyday relationships,’ this hardly constituted any sort of genuine critique of everyday life. Most of the ‘re-orientation towards everyday relationships’ during the time was fraught with ideological baggage that precisely prevented the development of such a critique. There were all kinds of incoherent amalgamations floating around, including aspects of drug culture, feminism, Maoism, anarchism, sexual liberation, dropout culture, etc. But they were just that—incoherent amalgamations—and not coherent critiques of everyday life in any way comparable to that of Raoul Vaneigem’s critique in his *Revolution of Everyday Life*. This type of coherent critique would have immediately called into question the rampant incoherence involved in the reformism, moralism, identity politics, workerism and authoritarianism of New Left organizations at the time.”

Where is the supposed “reductionist parody” here? Notice that I mention the actual New Left organizations prominent at the time, while Staudenmaier merely makes a very non-specific allegation with zero counter-examples. Why can’t Staudenmaier give us the name of at least *one* New Left group which embraced a genuine and thoroughgoing critique of everyday life? Is it because there were none?

Finally, Staudenmaier strangely asks for a recapitulation of the essential post-left arguments when he ends by asking: “Why would the sordid record of some parts of the left require an undifferentiated rejection of the left as a whole?” The obvious answer (given in “Rejecting the Reifications of Revolt” and “Leaving the Left Behind”) is that the “sordid record of some parts of the left” is merely the most visible tip of the problematic iceberg of leftism in general. All forms of political leftism share certain particular, problematic characteristics to varying degrees and in varying forms. The post-left anarchist critique is a fundamentally anarchist critique of these shared problematic characteristics (including reification, mediation and ideology, which are examined in detail in my essays). The conclusion of the post-left anarchist critique is that it makes more sense for anarchists to establish and maintain a consistent identity outside of the political left—rather than trying to remain a junior partner with a political movement whose major theories, practices and goals directly contradict those of most anarchists.

Pretty simple, isn’t it? Unfortunately, not for leftists like Staudenmaier who only seem to be interested in dissing, mystifying or ignoring the message in any manner available—which necessarily means never straightforwardly addressing the actual substance of the post-left anarchist critique. Once again, I challenge Peter to argue about substance and not irrelevancies. The differences between anarchists making a post-left critique and anarchists who continue to see themselves as part of the political left are, for the most part, far less than those between left-anarchists and all other (non-anarchist) leftists. If Staudenmaier considers himself an anarchist (do you, Peter?—or have you renounced anarchism like Murray Bookchin has in recent years^{Note 1}?) we should have enough in common to make a genuine debate possible.

Note 1: In an essay titled “The Communalist Project,” Murray Bookchin says: “Today I find that anarchism remains the very simplistic individualistic and antirationalist psychology it has always been. My attempt to retain anarchism under the name ‘social anarchism’ has largely been a failure, and I now find that the term I have used to denote my views must be replaced....” Peter, does this mean that like Bookchin you, too “find anarchism remains [a] very simplistic....psychology”? Or do you differ with Bookchin’s latest view?

Tortured Life

By vita cruciari

The beginning of the End

As an anarchist whose nine-to-five has kept me rooted in the "real world," I have always felt I had a good grip on living two lives. I would go to the office everyday, smile at my co-workers, be friends with my boss, and excel at being a team player. I would engage in the occasional vapid liberal political banter, never coming off as a zealot or apolitical, but knowing enough to appear to be an educated voter and make people think I cared. I would go home feeling unclean and relish the few hours of sanctuary I had before bed and the repetition of the cycle the next day.

It wasn't great, but it was better than being a non-profit lackey, which seemed to be the next best alternative. I could never quite stomach guilt-driven, wage-slave capitalism dressed up as something much more noble than it was. At least the nine-to-five was honest. There were no illusions about my place there or my worth to those people. Plus I liked making more than ten bucks an hour.

About a year ago I made a decision that I knew would change my life, although at the time I did not have a full understanding of exactly how. I decided I was going to go back to school after almost ten years away. To complicate matters more, it seemed plain to me that if I was going to get a degree (something I personally did not care that much about) I should play along and get "the most" out of it I possibly could. I am of a mind that if one must engage with the status quo, it should either be as quick and painless as possible (hence almost no engagement at all), or you should just jump in feet-first without a life jacket. I decided the latter course of action was the only sensible one, since the two years to my degree was no small endeavor. So instead of skating through at a state school or a politically correct educational institution, I chose a small, private, Ivy League-caliber school.

The truth is I always wanted to be a lawyer. When I was younger and a good liberal, my motivation was to fight the

good fight and dedicate my life to the Southern Poverty Law Center or some such nonsense. Needless to say, my motivations are different now. It does seem insanely paradoxical to me for an anarchist to choose a profession that drops you dead in the middle of the system, forcing you not just to interact with it but to proactively perpetuate it. Despite that truth, I am fascinated by the system. I am held captivated by the various layers of state, capital, and society. The intricacies of their weaving in and out of one another, the ways in which they are dependent and in which they must appear autonomous forces are staggering. The simplicities and complexities of what success and failure look like, mesmerizing. All of this ignites excitement and exhilaration in me. Studying and understanding the law seems an ideal way to quench my thirst for this knowledge, gain inside access to a world I would not get to see otherwise, and give me a skill that is not only useful for the rest of my life, anywhere I desire, but also applicable in ways the system does not necessarily intend.

Along the way to where I am now, it has been brought to my attention that if I really want full participation rights, I should probably cleanse myself of anything that could be seen as unsavory or too controversial. Hence the circle A title. Officially in my public, educational circle, I am not known as an anarchist. I am considered an educated liberal, as the demographic of my college dictates. But these are assumptions made on the part of my fellow students and professors, not because I have indicated to them this is true. Life as a liberal is not particularly difficult to pull off. I was one for most of life, only turning to anarchism in the last five years. Being a liberal whether for fun or for real is, of course, mind-numbingly boring and it is quite easy to lose one's way. Instead of looking at the world through black colored glasses, I simply respond to everything in that typical apathetic do-gooder way we are all familiar with. Blech! If I can't apply an anarchist critique I am simply not interested.

My biggest fear here is that being lost and bored will no longer be an act and I will cease to exist as a living, breathing, critically thinking anarchist body. As school demands more of my time, I spend more and more of my waking hours living the life by which I am least inspired. It is my hope to use this column to reconnect to my anarchist soul and be human again, to share my dual life experience from an anarchist place. I also hope this will help keep me honest. I would prefer to keep a

constant eye on the direction I am going and the choices I make, but that too is a task easily overlooked when one's head is down for so long. Perhaps there are others out there whose struggle is similar to mine and here they can find an opportunity to laugh at me and themselves. For the moment we take ourselves too seriously is the moment when we are truly lost.

Strategy & Anarchy

By Aragorn!

Preliminary Notes, Part 2

Another way to approach the question of anarchist social change is to draw a distinction between the different forms by which anarchists understand themselves. These forms approach questions of strategy in specific ways. While we are intending to focus on a critical examination of the role of anarchist strategy in the medium of social movements, many anarchists do not make their strategic decisions in that medium. Many anarchists are content to live their lives using anarchism as an ethical model that guides their decisions. Others apply anarchist techniques, without regard to their revolutionary pedigree, of which they may be ignorant.

How would we differentiate between these forms? As introduction we will orient around three mechanisms of anarchist formation: classical, popular, and modern. The classical form is ideological. Anarchism is a defensible philosophical and political position with an established program forged in the greater movement for socialism. The popular form is anarchism as method. Anarchists have come up with a large set of innovative solutions for everything from preventing trees from being cut down to methods of hunting and gathering in industrialized society. These methods have become sophisticated enough that they serve as the form in which many in the anti-globalization movement understand their connection to anarchism. The modern form is identification. Over time anarchism has accrued attributes that are normative to most

cultures (diet, jargon, holidays), which has resulted in many people connecting to anarchy through these attributes. These forms complicate matters of strategy because even the simplest of goals can be seen from each of these perspectives in entirely different ways.

As a way to deepen our understanding of these forms and to allow us to review the ways that we often represent (and have) multiple perspectives on the same problem, it is worth examining the mass movement model from the perspective of each anarchist form.

Ideological anarchists are concerned with definitions, history and belief. If they swam in the alphabet soup of Marxists they would be the ones concerned with having the correct "line." You often find them arguing over the merits of left or post-left anarchism, the potential of a newly reconstituted proletariat emerging as the new revolutionary subject or for the dispossessed emerging from their living rooms for an uprising, and generally for the merits of one hyphenated form of anarchism or another.

This anarchist evaluates the mass movement model as the hopeful analysis that civil society can practice a critique of the existing system with the eventual possibility of threatening the system due to popularizing the critique and growing to a scale that makes its agenda impossible to ignore. A good example in the United States would be an examination of how the Christian Coalition, in the 1980s and 90s, mobilized thousands of followers to join local Parent Teacher Associations which resulted in an ideological shift in the way that textbooks, method, and staffing occurred in the public school system over the past 15 years.

Besides the fact of whether or not ideological anarchists agree with the mass movement model of social change (the characteristics of which will be the subject for next time) they do see this form as being on the same chessboard that they are considering.

The method anarchists may not see themselves as separate from this form of organizing. This anarchist may not even call him or herself such but may use phrases like "anti-globalization activist," "community organizer," or "anti-authoritarian." Their connection to anarchism is usually through a practice of direct action as a way to foment social change. This is best exemplified by groups like the Ruckus Society (not the bureaucracy but the membership). It is not that they are anarchist organizations—they have just taken approaches in their direct

action that are anarchist in sensibility. This is due to a membership that sees anarchy as a description of their politic and direct action as the way that they are going to get it. Usually these organizations are filled with the conflict between this membership and a leadership that has a qualitatively different approach.

Prior to the anti-globalization movement there were other method anarchists. These were not limited to the back-to-the-lander and the urban bohemian scene but could include groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, which practice a non-hierarchical, decentralized approach to solving problems that affect the lives of their members.

The mass movement model is often the way that these anarchists understand their anarchism. They see their practice as building a movement of ideas and/or people. They see their practice as being focused on getting concrete, specific results and not adherence to a particular political position. Practices like decentralization, non-hierarchical decision-making, and direct action are largely seen as the lingua franca of an organizing model that is very modern and relevant. The fact that these techniques have an anarchist pedigree is irrelevant to the method anarchist.

The identity anarchist approaches these problems from a very different perspective. This anarchist is largely not "political" in that her or his rationale for being an anarchist is not necessarily the commitment to revolutionary social change, to overthrowing the government, or to getting arrested at the next demonstration. This anarchist likely passed through a time where all of these things did apply and then his or her desire for political action was outstripped by other aspects of living. These anarchists reflect the changing nature of the anarchist phenomena. The fact that identity anarchists exist demonstrates that anarchism is not merely a political perspective or an activist orientation but a set of cultural values and practices. Moreover this culture is not one particular kind of lifestyle but an open ended approach to living that includes everything from veganism to hunting and gathering, paganism to atheism and Catholicism, and complete social isolation to selfless community participation.

These anarchists may or may not see themselves as connected to a mass movement to the extent that they see that traditional political formations or behavior are an important part of their life. They may see claims of a mass movement as yet another way that politicians (of

many stripes) sell their agenda to people. They may also believe that they are part of a mass movement but that it doesn't take the form of direct opposition to the state. Primarily the identity anarchist has ambivalence to principles that can be both central and/or important to other forms of anarchist practice.

The divisions of anarchists along the lines explored here may not be entirely fair. Only three options are developed when there could have been many more. The options here are thumbnail sketches of the anarchist forms that do actually exist. But these divisions do develop a concept that should be far more dominant in our discussions. Anarchists have different approaches to the same problem and it may not be fair, may even be emblematic of the problems of normative society, to judge other anarchists by your particular worldview. Even the question that originates this column is not relevant to a substantial number of anarchist people. What is the strategy for an anarchist social change? Is it required to have anarchist in its name? Is it qualitatively different than the revolutionary program and histories it shares with non-anarchists? What price are we willing to pay for each unit of social change? These are questions that anarchists should be talking about now, prior to the next Spain, Kronstadt, or even Seattle.

While the question of anarchist social change may be more difficult to answer, anarchism as social-phenomena-with-teeth is enriched by the differing ways that people can begin to access it. To put this another way, there is a demographic reason that you mostly see anarchist politics practiced by people in a certain stage in their lives, at a certain age. This reason is not due to the personal weaknesses, or cultural composition, of anarchists (although both are relevant) but the structural nature of our society. Believe it or not, but most people have "settled down" by the time that they are 30 years old. Mortgages, raising children, and working 40 hours a week all become real aspects to a person's life. While it *may* be possible for someone to do all of this and continue to go to multiple meetings a week, engage in political organizing, and write a zine, it is certainly understandable why someone wouldn't choose to do this. This isn't even mentioning the fact that most people who want to be involved in good relationships should devote a serious amount of time to them. The transformation of the anarchist from the mythology of the black-clad bomb

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Have something to say? Write us!

We would like to encourage you to write us in order to continue this dialogue, whether you are sympathetic with or critical of anarchist theories and practices. All mailed letters will be printed with the author's name, city and state or country only, unless it is specifically stated that her/his full address may be used, that only initials should be used, or that s/he wishes to remain completely anonymous. Letter writers are also invited to give e-mail addresses.

All e-mails will be printed with the author's name and e-mail address only, unless it is specifically stated that a street address may be used, that only initials should be used, that the e-mail address should not be used, or that the author wishes to remain completely anonymous.

If necessary, we will edit letters that are redundant, overly long, unreadable, excessively boring or contain death threats or irrelevant, gratuitous personal attacks. (Ellipses in italicized brackets [...] indicate editorial omissions.) Limit length to three double-spaced, typewritten pages or 1,500 words. Address your letters to C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA; or by e-mail: jmcquinn@coin.org

Apology

We apologize to Bill Brown for printing a letter in the Fall/Winter 2003-04 *Anarchy* issue which made a gratuitous personal attack. From this point the magazine's letters policy has been changed as interested readers should note above. Henceforth, if you must make personal attacks please at least make sure that they have some genuine relevance to points of discussion before including them in letters sent for publication in this column.

Jason McQuinn
for *Anarchy* magazine

Conspiracy theory

Dear Jason,

"Confirming FBI reports of late September 2001," on October 9, 2001, the *Agence France Press* and the *Times of India* quoted an official Indian intelligence report (which had been dispatched to Washington, D.C. after 9-11) which stated that Pakistani ISI (CIA) Chief Mahmoud Ahmad (while meeting from September [4 through 13], 2001, in the U.S. capital with "key members of the Bush administration and the U.S. Congress" [e.g., Powell, Armitage, Grossman, Tenet, Grayham, Kyl, Goss, Biden, et al]), on September 10, 2001, ordered his ISI underling Omar Saeed Sheikh to wire \$100,000 from Pakistan to Florida to 9-11

ring leader WTC-hijacker-bomber Mohammed Atta.

"The information in the Indian intelligence report regarding the money transfer by Pakistan's ISI is corroborated by the FBI-led investigation in the wake of September 11."

The contents of this quote and the aforementioned mainstream news media and FBI reports are typical examples of what can be found in Michel Chossudovsky's *War and Globalization: The Truth Behind September 11*, chapters IV and X and *Global Outlook* (www.globalresearch.ca), issue 1, pp. 16-19; issue 2, pp. 68-70, "Political Deception: The Missing Link Behind 9-11;" issue 3, pp. 19-28; issue 4, pp. 34-38, "Daniel Pearl and the Paymaster of 9-11."

"...The proximity of at least one group of Israeli agents to Mohammed Atta's residence in Florida raises the possibility [i.e., the possibility '...that the Mossad had advance knowledge or involvement in the events of 9-11.'], as does the fact that an unusually high number of the I-Spies were concentrated in Florida—home to at least ten of the 9-11 hijackers one time or another. We also have the disturbing revelation by one of the white van 'movers' that he and his fellow Mossad agents 'were here to document the [9-11] event.' Then there are the clas-

sified 'tie-ins' between certain Israeli agents and 9-11 referred to in both the FOX News and *Washington Post* stories above." (brackets added)

"The anthrax mailings appear to be a 'white collar crime'—a military-industrial conspiracy involving chief biological weapons 'preparedness' firms and the CIA."

The contents of these last two quotes are also typical examples of what can be found in "the world's leading conspiracy reader," *Paranoia* (<http://www.paranoiamagazine.com>), issue 28, p. 50, "Declaring War on the Human Spirit: The Media Spectacle vs. The Collective Psyche," by Frank Berube & Joan D'Arc (*Paranoia* co-founder); issue 28, p. 22, "Moving Targets: The Real Strategies Behind the War on Terror" by Al Hidell (*Paranoia* "co-founder and international relations student who has studied under former National Security Advisor Tony Lake"); issue 31, p. 18, "I [i.e., Israeli]-Spies, Espionage, and 9/11" by Al Hidell, and p. 62, "The Awful Secret" by John Kaminsky (who accuses the Bush Administration of "complicity," (i.e., perpetration?) "in the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York City and Washington D.C."); and issue 32, p. 34, "Covering the Tracks on the State-Terror Trail" by Len Bracken, author of *Shadow Government: 9-11 and State Terror*. You can also find in

Paranoia, issue 27, p. 24, "Desperation Science: The Hidden Agenda of Darwinian Evolution," by Wendy Wallace; issues 28 & 30, "Richard Nixon and Conspiracy in the Kent State Shootings I & II," respectively, by the scholarly Katie Klemenich and "The Stronghold & the Shrine Revisited" by this writer in *Paranoia* 30.

That the state is a teleological, terrorist collaboration of conspirators is well documented by the articles I have cited above.

In consideration of such reliable reports implicating Bush and key members of his cabinet in the perpetration of the 9-11 terrorist attacks—reports which are all drawn from the public record, e.g., mainstream news media and FBI reports—it appears conspiratorial, on *Anarchy's* part, ironically, to defend dominant bourgeois, Darwinian-Marxist Orthodoxy (which erroneously stipulates that "inexorable laws of nature," i.e., inanimate "matter in motion" "precedes consciousness" and thus "dialectical materialism" is the prime mover of History) by excluding conspiracy theory from its pages. Conspiracy theorists, however, argue conversely, that consciousness precedes inanimate "matter in motion" and thus the divinely guided conspiratorial consciousness of the individual authority-crazed shaman, socio-economic ritualist-specialist, master of

Preliminary Notes, Part 2

Continued from previous page

thrower into the college student, family member, and retired person is also the change of a singular point-of-view to a multitude of perspectives.

This has not happened by chance. The fact that long term thinking on our part is seriously challenged by us living the life we want is the consequence of strategic choices made by the interlocking structures of domination. Even if you are living an "uncontrollable" lifestyle you are not necessarily challenging even the sensibilities of anyone outside of your circle of friends, family, and coworkers.

While here I have used the mass movement model to illustrate the differences in these three anarchist forms, in the next column I am going to deal at length with the consequences, strengths and weaknesses of the mass movement model of social change.

ceremonies, kingpin hoarder of religious symbology (*i.e.*, the state) is the prime mover of History.

If the "time dilated" Homo sapiens state terrorist interstellar juggernaut, prime mover spectacle of the symbolic totality and the "megamachine" *i.e.*, "mechanized men," is an ongoing universal, conspiratorial law of the jungle, then so must also be the conspiracy theories of anarcho-primitivists. Moreover, proletarian fear of an "aristocratic conspiracy" is a common major theme of five of the greatest revolutions in World History, *i.e.*, American, 1775; French, 1789; Paris Commune, 1871; Russian, 1917; and Spanish, 1936. Communards of the Paris Commune, for example, declared the sovereignty of Paris, predominantly under the influence of this fear of an "aristocratic conspiracy"—in spite of Bob Black's elliptical and ahistorical "Even aside from the absurdity of sovereign city-states in the 21st century".... (See Bob Black on Bookchin in *Anarchy* #51, p. 19)

Why have you banned from the pages of *Anarchy* conspiracy theorists' articles (whose sources are all drawn from the mainstream news media and FBI reports) like the dozen, or so, examples I have cited above? Some of the authors of these exquisitely crafted exposés are neo-Marxist revisionists and social anarchists who believe that "taking it to the streets [and war paths]" is, as always amongst all social activities, at the vanguard of revolutionary anarchist practice.

As we sit around (May 2003) theorizing, waiting for when and where the next war of the "War on Terror" will incinerate the Innocence of Earth, the Workers World Party [a.k.a. Worker's World Publications, 55 West 17th Street, NYC, 10011, phone # 1-212-255-0352 (a.k.a. International A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition [Act Now to Stop War & End Racism], 39 West 14th Street #206, NYC 10011, phone # 1-212-633-6646, computer A # nyc@internationalANSWER.org, web site, www.internationalANSWER.org, Washington D.C. office of International

ANSWER, phone # 1-202-544-3389, Workers World Party Chief, Sam Marcey or Brian Becker, phone # 1-202-332-5757)] is conspiring (as it did, successfully, in January, 1991 and October, 2002) to suspend the scheduling of anti-war demonstrations in Washington D.C. until after a convened U.S. Congress on Capital Hill votes on upcoming Bush war measures. The Workers World Party (the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist, Manhattan-based piranha since the 1930s and the undisputed supreme executive director of the U.S. Anti-War Movement) has for the past 13 years, deliberately, prevented the U.S. Anti-War Movement from protesting in Washington D.C. (during Congressional war debates on Capital Hill) so that the protestors could not influence the convened Congress to vote against Bush war measures. At this very moment, May, 2003, the Workers World Party state Communist Central Committee's dictatorship over the U.S. Anti-War Movement is conspiring to aid and abet the Bush War Machine in its efforts to kick off its next war without a national D.C. convened Anti-War protest, which would have been mustered in order to influence a convened U.S. Congress on Capital Hill to vote against the war. Those anarchists who purposefully neglect to influence (via Washington D.C. protests) a convened U.S. Congress on Capital Hill to vote against a war of U.S. state terror, are, objectively, working in tandem with it! "No" to all Wars! Not just to some Wars!" (See "Openers" section by Jason McQuinn, Editor, in *Anarchy* #55.)

David G. Pearson
Arlington, MA

"Boring fart"

Dear editors,

I read your magazine #56 recently. On page 76 John Connor AKA Paul Rogers says I told the late John Moore that Grace Jones was a man. I would like to point out that I *never* discussed such a matter with John. One thing is for sure we both agreed that Rogers was a

boring fart, and a liar....

He and Zerzan will not be pleased, we are reprinting—as a pamphlet, the document which we distributed when the primitivist bandwagon was in London on the 22nd of September 2000. The text is called: "John Zerzan and the Primitive Confusion."

All best wishes,
Michel Prigent
London, England

Predestiny is real

Approaching Happiness
Stop using money, outright.
Pride is sin—if you are using money you are the problem.
That "the truth sets us free" is not just a catch-phrase—
I know predestiny is real because the entirety of the "now" is a product of all experience leading to it. I know "choice" is not real because we are our experience, and only ever can be. —This is knowledge that must be known if we are to transcend our fear.

The entirety of the money system is collapsing.
Attempting to maintain a financial state is folly—give until you die.
This exodus is real. It begins with dumpster diving, cardboard houses and planting food everywhere. It leads to the reality of a world of trust where we all know what we are.
This is not philosophical fancy—

this is exactly what's needed to be considered.
The game is not about survival. Or more about, the only true survival be that of our sanity and knowing how it responds when we try to ignore truth. It is not about having an alternate "system." It is about doing right regardless of consequence while trusting in love's inspiration (which is about efficiency).
Money fuels pride.
Pride is ignorance of the fact that anything that comes from us comes from the experiences that made us. A fact that people would ignore because of a want of belief in "free-will." That we

are only our experience, objectively, means that whatever we would think of as a "choice" can only be our experience reacting to the "now."

It's laziness, at it's root. An apprehension of the "daunting" responsibility of being humble—which is dedication to truth and a knowing that love is real and the only intent. Believing in a lie makes us crazy. When we pretend to believe in a lie we justify it by living a lie, allowing for spite at those who do not believe in that lie, hence suffering.
When we know we will die gracefully we come to see the pure absurdity of being motivated by fear.

love,
David Arthur Johnston
Victoria, BC, Canada
hatrackman@yahoo.com

No more irrationality

Hello Jason,

I appreciated your editorial "Evasion of Rational Discussion in the Radical Milieu." I have faced this problem mainly outside of the "radical milieu," most notably at the message board for the right-wing military-oriented website, www.boottotheskull.com. If you decide to post on the board, and you are not a flag-waving simpleton, prepare to hear some very naughty words and some really childish responses. If you are merely a Democrat or an anti-Semite (most of the posters there are right-wing cheerleaders for Bush and Israel)—neither of which offer much of a challenge to even the low-level reactionism evident at Boot to the Skull—then you will probably be safe, welcomed even. But if you are constantly in their faces with facts and logic that erode their illusions, illusions shared by the liberal-conservative combine, watch out! Your days are numbered. And if you are a thoughtful critic of Israel (G-d forbid!) and actually know the real history of that country's origin and behavior, then you will be labeled an anti-Semite as surely as the sun rises over the

Jordan each morn. If you persist in spite of this nonsense, and dodge their childish antics and maneuvers, and continue to post anyway, prepare to be banned by the BTTS' own Il Duce, Pipes McGee (pipesmcgee@boottotheskull.com), or one of his foul-mouthed underlings, like Dongha (don't ask). That's right, I'm naming names. Other childish posters were: HBendor, a rabid defender of Eretz Israel, sacred fatherland of "The Jew" (ironically mirroring Nazi racist thinking), if not of actual Jews, especially ones who retain the right and the ability to think, a clown who apparently thought "nuh uh" some sort of powerful refutation; JenyEliza, who was on my no doubt unsettling shit like a half-starved Limbaugh fly. Then there was greginoise, a real tool from the toolies (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=toolies>); and, last but not least (worst), Turret Gunner A20, an apparent American Legion/Archie Bunker-type with a nagging corn whose method of refutation was name-calling in multiple font colors and sizes and the ever-popular barfing emoticon, his trademark. (I must name one conservative exception, Alkee McCoy, a rather cute and smart girl from Ohio and one of the few BTTS regulars I was able to have a reasonable discussion with.) The self-appointed task of all of these people (besides Alkee) was to ridicule and rant and rave every time any semblance of meaningful dissent and reason appeared. It made me think these cyber-warriors were acting on the U.S. military doctrine of using overwhelming force against even the feeblest opposition. Only these were certainly not smart bombs. Once in a while I allowed these provocateurs to, well, provoke me. Generally, however, I just laughed at or ignored their insults and carried on discussing, get this, the matter at hand. Odd, I know, but I'm weird that way. But it gets worse. The insults and irrationality were one thing, but Pipes McGee pretending to be above the fray when in fact he was nothing of the sort compounded these. He

proved to be just as much an irrational sniveler as his pet posters. In other words it was a rigged game. Free speech and rational discourse was not allowed, august claims to the contrary notwithstanding. When

tion they could imagine, and I have little doubt they experienced similar treatment at liberal sites.

Even worse is what McQuinn discusses, irrationality within the radical milieu. We should in

fact expect childish and fanatical irrationality from the right, even the most thoughtful among them are mostly just irrational children who use bigger words—sometimes. The inability to think and to engage in rational discourse is part of the definition of the right, and indeed all authoritarian systems of thought. It is part of what makes them what they are. Childish and fanatical irrationality in our milieu should be startling. This recalls for me the idea that the political spectrum should not run from left to right, meaningless categories, but from libertarian to au-

thoritarian. If radicals are unable and unwilling to have rational and open discussions with other radicals who have different ideas, much less with anyone else, then we are in an important sense no different than our authoritarian counterparts. For them, irrationality is a way of life; for us it is a tremendous shame that belies our basic identifications.

Rationally yours,

Ron Leighton

Fountain Valley, CA

<http://twainsghost.blogspot.com>

twainsghost03@fastmail.fm

or soulinvictus@yahoo.com

No hunting!

Anarchy,

Here we go again! Another ra-ra primitivism! This time, last issue, John Zerzan and the like—his minus any mention of what "hunter-gatherer" really

implies, or rather "hunter." Implies what? Ask the hunted animals! Ah, but hunting is so natural! Tell that to the animals!

Not that I care a helluva lot for civilization, its hi-tech and all. But if precivilization includes the barbarism known as hunting, then hells bells! I'll take civilization any ol' day, particularly that civilization (or community) that can free itself from the murderous meateating. (It was Thoreau who said it's not civilization but the *kind* of civilization.)

Should the damn hunting be equated with the million-year precivilization, as Zerzan and the like seem to equate? Hell no! The hunting popped up *late* in precivilization, toward its end. The million-year stretch *before* was one of *matriarchy*. The much later hunting, aside from the slaughter and victimization of other species, introduced the damn *patriarchy*. If males, for food or domestication, got dominance over other species, why not over the women, domestication thereof!

Evelyn Reed, anthropologist, wrote a book called *Woman's Evolution*. She goes into how hunting got started. When the men wanted to eat their small children, the women said, "If you wish to hunt, *hunt out!*—outside the village!" And so the men did. And so a good idea, John, to *read Reed!* Ya just might pick up on a thing or two.

Sam Colman

Detroit, MI

Embarrassing cat?

Dear *Anarchy*,

I just finished reading issue #56. Do you intend to reprint "The Cat" in the next "Embarrassments to the Anarchist Milieu" section?

All the best,

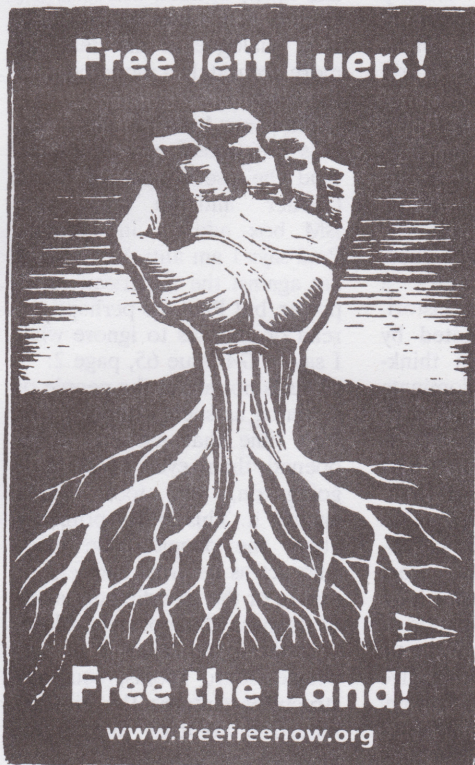
Dave Negation

Portland, OR

Telepathic cats?

Dear *Anarchy*,

In the '60s, the situationists declared, "Our ideas are on everyone's minds." Ultimately, they proved to be mistaken. But



I finally reacted to this Dongha character, who could not stand the fact that I was saying things he did not agree with, as astonishing as it may sound, McGee demanded that I apologize! Mouth agape, I typed him a response asking him if he was serious. He said he was. Well, the opinion that I held, precariously, that the Mods there could be trusted to be mature and rational went out the window. I refused to apologize a number of times and continued to post but was eventually banned for my reaction to Dongha. No recognition was offered that I was among the rare posters at the board to avoid ridicule and name-calling and even to endure the same far more than any of them deserved. Now, at least a couple of posters there said they had similar experiences at liberal sites, the most far out opposi-

if cats have telepathy as Michael William seems to think, maybe cats' ideas are on everyone's minds—the problem might be in reading them...Oh! I think I'm picking one up right now!

"Me-e-e-o-o-w! Smash civilization!...And bring me my tuna snacks! Nyow!!!"

Wolfi
acraticus@yahoo.com

No to "vicious imperialist apologetics"

AJODA-

It was good to see Lawrence Jarach's short review of David Fromkin's *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (1989) in *AJODA* #56. This book covers mostly British imperialist policy in south and southwestern Asia roughly from 1912 to 1922 in some detail from a broad, international perspective. Jarach complains that "the book is still mired in the questionable trajectory of the Great Men of History school," and I would add that its length (more than 550 pages), its meticulously-wrought footnotes, and its front-cover "New York Times Bestseller" promotional blurb may also discourage some of *AJODA*'s regular readers. Nonetheless, I highly recommend Fromkin's book for use in radical reading circles and study groups.

In the last few years, there have been plenty of people who have spoken out against war and empire from an almost instinctual sense of outrage. Fromkin's book is useful for those who want to add a little historical depth to their critiques; as Jarach wrote, "an anti-capitalist and anti-statist peace would require grappling with the wounds left by colonialism," and I agree with him that Fromkin's book is very useful means for beginning that work. The World War I-era situations and incidents described by Fromkin fifteen years ago are eerily relevant to almost all of today's struggles in the Middle East, particularly the episodes of stunning colonialist arrogance and ignorance and

the self-serving decisions made by regional despots. For instance, I was surprised to learn that the bizarre cross-pollination of ruling-class anti-Semitism and Christian Zionism that dominates the Bush-Cheney regime's policy towards the State of Israel today actually has its origins in the cabinet of British Prime Minister David Lloyd George during World War I.

For anticrats and other anti-statists concerned about both the histories and futures of imperialism, revolutionary nationalism, ethnic warfare, and the role of Islam in western Asia, Fromkin's book provides a hearty alternative to the historical revisionism propagated by the Republican Party's think-tank commissars who dominate public discourse on these matters. Academics like Fouad Ajami and Bernard Lewis who argue that more Anglo-US military and economic domination is needed in the region to "liberate" Islamized Arabs from savage cultural resentment have succeeded in setting the tone of discussion that is constantly repeated by the neoconservative fedayeen in the US and Europe. In fact, in their awful *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923*, neocolonial cheerleaders Efraim and Inari Karsh directly attack Fromkin's book on the postwar settlement as a historical "caricature in which Middle Eastern countries and frontiers were fabricated in Europe." Instead, the Karshes claim that the ways and means that the British used to carve up the ex-Ottoman Empire after World War I show Britain's supposedly sensitive and benevolent "desire to conform to local realities and forces."

This is exactly the kind of vicious imperialist apologetics that continue to assail us daily from the meeting rooms of the Pentagon, the on-air studios of Fox News, and the best-seller section of neighborhood corporate bookstores, and this is what makes well-grounded opposing historical perspectives like Fromkin's a valuable tool.

Don LaCoss
depthsquad@hushmail.com

Cul de sac

Dear *AJODA*,

Paul Rogers' letter [*AJODA*, Winter 2003-4, p. 76] hits out at many people including the late Peter Neville, the ACF, myself, *Fifth Estate* and Michel Prigent, and in my opinion indicates the sterility of his own approach. It is a "dialogue of the deaf" or more accurately a monologue of the dead.

Paul says I am paranoid, but it is not myself who hides behind the pseudonym of "John Conner" and an untraceable BM box address in London. Paul says I am anti-American. I am against the American super power, but Paul has perhaps not read or chooses to ignore what I say in *GA* issue 65, page 2:

"This is not about the people of America as such; although it is high time that more of them opened their eyes to what is going on, and took action against it. This is not primarily about the people, save those who act as its arms and legs or minds, or the spending decisions of its mass of supporters. More, it is about the injustice of corporate board rooms, company structures, cultures, the military-industrial complex and unjust political hierarchies."

Paul's way of politics has come to a cul de sac for two reasons. One is his advocacy of the false political philosophy of Primitivism. My analysis of this is in "Primitivism: An Illusion With No Future." The second reason is Paul's whole internet method of conducting politics. His letter is a good example of this. In his many attacks on other people and groups he rejects the possibility of coalition building. It is egotistical and arrogant because only those holding the correct Primitivist political line are acceptable to him. The rest lie outside his stockade. There isn't any point to this attitude, it becomes self-perpetuating, incestuous and isolating.

In my opinion the real difference between us is not just over ideas, but also method. The Primitivist project idealistically stands on the sidelines and demands we adopt an alienated, absolute rejection of most as-

pects of our present life, of society and human possibilities. It is all and nothing, because it cannot possibly make that first, infinite step. My approach is pragmatic—to try to work with people in the here and now to achieve something real and concrete. Step by step and incrementally, we build up. I want to be part of providing a positive and real change for the better in peoples' lives today.

This is written in sadness and should not be construed as a personal attack on Paul Rogers—there isn't any point. I feel upset about what has happened to Paul. We are all connected together and we are all responsible for how the world is. Radical publishing is responsible for the framework in which activists cast their thoughts. Do we serve those people well? Things are bad, and we have to try to turn this present situation round. Paul's Primitivism is one big evasion. It does not have a programme for action which brings meaningful results. It does harm to the radical project because it immobilises.

It is a counsel of despair. This is such a shame because I worked with Paul for about 10 years, and know he has many positive things to offer radical politics.

Stephen Booth
Galgate, Lancaster
England

Surrealism?

Recently, I read with some curiosity Ron Sakolsky's piece on surrealism and anarchism, published in your Fall-Winter 2004 issue. I had previously encountered Sakolsky's editing of a rather large collection of writings from the Chicago surrealist group published last year by Autonomedia. The misfortune here is that Sakolsky seems to root his sources in Chicago surrealism, when the Rosemonts & Co. seem to speak for surrealism, taking for truth what is problematic at best, and a distortion at worst, when viewed historically and internationally.

I say this as a surrealist who collaborates with the Paris *SURR* group and other surrealists who remain fiercely inde-

pendent of any group anywhere. I find little in the surrealism that the Chicago group promotes as worthy of the name. That is a personal view, of course, but one also tempered by my association with *Arsenal* during the years 1973-1977.

Sakolsky's piece is little more than an historical accounting that anyone could make on their own, and would have done better to make on their own, by a careful reading of surrealist texts now available in English. At the same time, it reflects a general debasement of the dialogue between political groups of whatever stripe and their cultural allies, perhaps a sign of the times but one that Sakolsky does little to clarify. As much a matter of language as the spirit of revolt that currently infuses surrealism, and perhaps that of anarchism, this debasement is a larger issue, to be sure, but one I cannot deal with in this letter, save in pointing out the first paragraph, which seems strung together, almost ruefully, by several clichés that the Chicago group, and now Sakolsky, repeat ad infinitum to the point of nausea: "dancing flames of desire, leap wildly from the crucible of revolt, marvelous collage of freedom."

Some further clarifications are in order. Sakolsky quite readily reaffirms an early affinity of the Rosemonts with the Paris surrealist group, but then has nothing to say of the history of that relationship, which by 1976 had degenerated. In fact, the only published mention by the Paris group of the 1976 World Surrealist Exhibition, held in Chicago, comes in a small, corrosively dismissive

critique, which compares the Chicago crew with "American missionaries, but here preaching the surrealist revelation as others the resurrection of Jesus" (*Surrealisme* 1, 1977).

I do not mean to mince historical hairs, what is past is past. But I do wish to say that the self-perception of the Chicago surrealists rarely matches how others perceive them. That Sakolsky did not take it upon himself to investigate the possibility of there being an issue here also says something about his myopia as an editor of, and commentator on, Chicago surrealism and surrealism in general.

The point he misses, and has missed, is quite simple: surrealism endures through various crises, splits, arguments, dissolutions and regroupings. Its history is scored with such moments, and its vitality is in direct proportion to how it recognizes and responds to them. Surrealism has no immunity from the conflicts that otherwise ravage us.

One final note: When Sakolsky uncritically quotes Rosemont—"surrealism continues to flourish in the only way it can: *outside and against* all the dominant paradigms"—he suggests that Rosemont & Co. sustain that vector. Of course, Sakolsky goes on to call for a "non-sectarian approach" but only in regard to surrealism and anarchism. Will Sakolsky never ask himself whether or not the Chicago surrealists promote their own sectarian paradigm of surrealism, and why so many surrealists initially attracted to them, if only out of curiosity, find their way elsewhere?

Allan Graubard
Washington, DC

Action and commitment

Dear J. McQuinn,

One of the themes that runs throughout revolutionary circles is an inherent assumption that opinion and practice will be "built," will somehow congeal, that there will be some kind of major consensus of coming together with revolutionary principle being the tie that binds it all together. This is a fallacy. Not only is it a fallacy it is a fallacy in an extreme way. Humans, as units, as the smallest singular social unit do not blend easily. This is particularly true under capitalism. We saw that it was true under Leninist socialism too. We were able to slough off the Leninist socialism but have been unable to date to sluff off free market capitalism, not because it is superior to Leninist socialism, but because it is much more heinous.

Anarchism has an iconic social value that deludes today's would-be revolutionary. Revolution is always over the next rise, around the next corner. People will somehow come together for the revolution. Delusion. People will not "come together" in any huge numbers ever. People will believe what they are told consistently if it appears to be coming from an overseer who is seen as being in control. Being "in control" has a way of appearing benevolent whether it is or not. Revolution requires action, real impetus, real one-way commitment. Tomorrow is not coming without it.

Arguing consensus, while good for community, is bad for revolution. You want ecological sanity? You want social equity? You must cross-over to revolu-

tion. Otherwise, you are simply a creature of compromise, destined for mediocrity, a lie, capitalist roadkill.

Stop assessing political correctness and do something.

Volunteer!

Brian McCarvill
Umatilla, OR

Albanian anarchist library appeal

Dear Editor,

Our non-profit, free anarchist library group (Rilindje Library Project) sent you a couple of letters in the last few years. It seems that our/your(?) postal services are not reliable so now we are using a safe Swiss address.

RLP is based in Tirana and has not enough means to order your periodical. (Here the monthly salary is \$30-40 average only!) In case you are in a position to help us any back issues of your periodical would be welcome.

Maybe some of your readers or friends would be glad to support our work in a very difficult part of the world especially after all the Balkan wars!

Any addresses of other such publications would be highly appreciated—here we do not have access to the internet!

Truly,

R.A. Dogeier for R.L. Project
c/o PF 256
CH 4142 Munchenstein-2
Switzerland

Marxism and critical theory?

Anarchy Magazine,

The latest *Anarchy* magazine implores the reader, rightfully

4Y-RECORDS: STEPPING ON CAT LITTER SINCE 1985.



so, to participate in meaningful dialogues: this letter is my attempt to do so. There are a number of ideas/issues put forth by your magazine/writers that I find both invigorating and perplexing, and, as a result, I wish to further explore these points in order to clarify and refine my own. Being new to theory, the formidable task of sifting through mountains of texts lay before me—anarchist and all that is included therein, Marxism, critical theory, structuralism, poststructuralism, romanticism, enlightenment, modernism, postmodernism, avant-garde, dada, surrealism, situationalism, and so on *ad infinitum*. My encounter with anarchism corresponded with that of Marxism—and it was through a labyrinthine, backwards route of ideologically biased texts and denunciations, guided by no one except my curiosity and the will to understand, through which I managed to find amidst the hysteria, nuggets of theory that I felt helped to clarify this sick, crazy world I've been spewed onto. I've come a long way and my worldview has experienced a number of paradigm flips and as I stand, I find myself viewing the world through a kaleidoscopic filter of eclectic ideas drawn from numerous sources.

Then I encountered your magazine that proposes Anarchy After Leftism. I know, you must be reeling at the thought of engaging in this topic once again, but, perhaps you are not. Being intuitively drawn to revolutionary theory, I must admit, your proposal to completely abandon Marxist and post-Marxist thought struck me as strange, and thus I was deeply intrigued. Anytime one hears a statement that makes one recoil, it is a very good indication that it should be explored, which I have tried to do with an open mind, usually with surprising results. In my attempt to discover more, I purchased Bob Black's book, which didn't really answer my specific questions (though it was funny—the world's oldest young Hegelian!) and I've explored that useless pile of E-Shit called the internet but to no avail.

It is your precise position on

Marxism and critical theory that I am inquiring about. I am by no means an orthodox Marxist, and I recognize the folly that comprises most of it, yet there are certain ideas I would have trouble abandoning, and which I have found invaluable in making revolutionary theory clear, as well as making the need for revolutionary theory understandable for the uninitiated. As with most theory, I have taken what I feel is relevant and jettisoned the rest, and it is these points which I would like to hear your opinion, for, unlike many others, I actually respect your opinions.

- 1) Alienation—Due to extreme Taylorism.
- 2) Object/Commodity Fetishism
- 3) Ideology and Hegemony
- 4) Reification
- 5) The surplus theory of labor that inevitably means the exploitation of workers.
- 6) That capitalism, combined with industrialism and nationalism, inevitably leads to imperialism by monopolies and, given capitalism's necessity to constantly expand both geographically and technologically, once all geographic space has been overrun and the world's resources maximized, economic stratification will increase to horrific proportions and it will inevitably self destruct (not that anyone wants to wait and not that its fall will lead to a utopia or socialism).
- 7) The idea of the culture industry as presented by Adorno and Horkheimer.
- 8) The ideas of the social unconscious and repressive desublimation [of] Marcuse.
- 9) Base/Superstructure. This may be a stretch but I have found it to be useful in understanding the ways that the economic systems permeate every day life and thought to such an extent that familial structures, relationships, even our conception of time has been contaminated. Though I understand this is overtly simplistic, I feel it could be something like 75% accurate.

Mind you, most of this is not latter-day Marx, most of it is from his early Humanistic writings in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* as well as

the *German Ideology*. It is also derived from later thinkers such as Gramsci, Lukács, Benjamin, Fromm, and the above-mentioned Marcuse, Adorno, and Horkheimer. Obviously gone are any ideas concerning centralization or cadre parties of intellectuals and so on.

In regards to your own beliefs, do you consider yourselves humanistic (man is not an end in himself nor a means to anything and that man is essentially good but corrupted by outside forces?), do you reject the Enlightenment (science and technology will eventually lead to a utopia?) and also reject postmodernism's claims that deny an essential human nature, denies free will but you accept postmodernism's rejection of grand narratives and foundationalism, and are you existential in that you believe in free will and that we are free to create our own morality (if we want it)?

Anarchism seems to be humanistic, which the above Marxism is as well, which would reject postmodernism's claim that liberation is impossible. It would also seem steeped in romanticism (nature, hedonism, individualism, simplicity).

Do you feel that the above-mentioned should be totally abandoned as useless, or maybe dangerous? For, I feel that the above Marxist points are invaluable tools that can be appropriated by anarchists trying to see through the ideologically social constructs of reality, and can aid in the uncovering of hidden mechanism of repression, and more precisely locate domination both overt and assimilated in every day, which is present in the seemingly innocuous institutions and activities, and which requires refined tools to uncover so as to better deconstruct.

I appreciate any time and consideration given my questions.

Dr. Brian Oblivion
and the Troubadours of Funk
Lovewarpstain@att.net

Lawrence responds: No-win situation

To ask whether or not any of us reject or accept your two-dimen-

sional definitions puts us in a no-win situation.

Even so, I will attempt to get at a few of your questions. Am I a Humanist? Do I believe that human beings are the only or most important measure of moral judgment and value in the world? No, but not because I believe in a transcendental deity. I reject Humanism because it is a moral ideology, and I am not a moralist. Am I opposed to the Enlightenment? No, but I am opposed to aspects of the Enlightenment project; ideologically biased science (what I have called Scientism elsewhere), rationalism as the pinnacle of human intellectual achievement, solutions to social problems being calculated by efficiency and expedience, the ethos of competition as the primary driving force of culture, etc. Do I reject Postmodernism? This presumes that PM is a monolithic worldview, which even the PoMos fight about. Am I an Existentialist? No, but not because I am a Humanist. Am I a Romantic? Absurd.

What you have overlooked is that none of these philosophical categories is hermetically isolated—they all exist in relation to others that preceded or competed with them. Humanism makes little sense in a world without religion. The Enlightenment as well would not have fired the imagination of European intellectuals and philosophers if the Catholic Church hadn't held a monopoly on education for generations. Postmodernism and Existentialism would be meaningless in a world without colonialism. Romanticism would have nothing to react against if Modernism and Rationality hadn't played a pivotal role in the anti-feudal and anti-monarchical movements in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It seems to me that for all of your appreciation for certain analytical categories of classical Marxism, your allegiance to it seems to have stopped before you learned about dialectics.

Jason responds: Quick answers

While addressing *Anarchy* magazine, you say, "It is your precise position on Marxism and critical theory that I am inquiring about." However, you should be aware that the editors of—and contribu-

Embarrassments to the Anarchist Milieu!

Given the often sad state of much of what passes for discussion within the contemporary anarchist milieu, both on the internet and in other media like periodicals, books and even film or video, this column is designed to spotlight some of the worst examples of anarcho-paranoia, anarcho-dogma, anarcho-illogic and anarcho-hate in order to encourage everyone to think a bit more and take more care in their contributions to anarchist media of all kinds. We encourage readers to submit especially egregious nominations for future editions of this column by mail (C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205) or e-mail (jmcquinn@coin.org). Please submit *only* verifiable, examples of *public* embarrassments to anarchists, including relevant bibliographic or internet address information.

This issue's "Embarrassment to Anarchists" is a post—written by a prominent San Francisco Bay area anarchist—to the sfbay-anarchists.org site. It was also posted to Indymedia SF.

Open Letter To Progressive/Left/Radical Activists to Help Gonzalez Win and Build Movement by Chris Crass Monday November 24, 2003 at 03:47pm

On December 9th, we have a real opportunity to win an important victory in San Francisco. Electing Matt Gonzalez to Mayor would be a step in the direction we need to move in this city, state and country.

We urge you, if you are not already, to campaign and vote for Matt Gonzalez for Mayor of San Francisco. We are community organizers, left/radical writers and direct action activists who see this campaign as an opportunity to help build the power of our social change movements. On Nov 4th we won a landmark living wage campaign (Prop L), which will increase the wages of an estimated 54,000 workers. We also lost against Gavin Newsom's Prop M which increases the power of downtown corporations and increases the crackdown on poor people, mostly poor peo-

ple of color. Right now, our movements faced violent police repression opposing the FTAA in Miami, forcing a weak compromise amongst trade delegates. We won an important victory against the WTO in Cancun. We are on the move.

We write to you as radicals who believe that power comes from the bottom up and that people's movements make history. We argue for a diversity of tactics in an overall strategy to oppose capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, heterosexism and imperialism. We see this election as one of many tactics that we should use to help us build our movements.

A broad coalition of community, environmental, queer, feminist, racial justice and tenant groups along with unions willing to endorse outside the Democratic Party and a wide spectrum of activists is on the move to win this election. This coalition isn't about Matt Gonzalez, it's about building power to fight back and win.

Willie Ratcliff, the editor of the *SF Bay View* endorses Matt arguing that it will increase the chances of the Black community to gain economic security and fight against police brutality. Long-time anti-war direct action organizers Leda Dederich and Keith Hennessy announced their fundraiser for Gonzalez with a declaration to "Help build democratic, community-based political power in San Francisco." They helped shut down the financial district protesting the war.

We urge you to get involved not because we expect that Gonzalez would solve our problems, rather that a victory by this coalition will help build our power to solve our own problems. We need everyone working on the Gonzalez campaign now to continue fighting for economic, environmental, racial and social justice after December 9th, no matter who wins. Help make this a reality.

For more information about getting involved go to mattgonzalez.com. You can vote by mail now. Applications for absentee ballots are due by 5pm Tuesday, December 2nd. The campaign needs people to phone bank, table and get out lit in neighborhoods. There are campaign events and fundraisers everyday leading up to Dec 9th.

tors to—this magazine hold no unitary views. However, I'll contribute a quick response to your questions from my own personal perspective.

First, my position on Marxism is that Marx was a very intelligent, but very egotistical and ultimately narrow-minded ideologist who said a few very important things (especially his critique of commodity fetishism and some other aspects of his analyses of capitalism), but who also said many worthless or harmful things ("dictatorship of the proletariat," the dogma of historical materialism, class reductionism, etc.). I have little use for Marxism, which, for the most part, is the

name given to the dogmatic systematizations of some of Marx's more well-known attitudes and writings, along with the groups and ideologists who promote them as gospel.

Critical theory is another matter, since this can be taken two ways: critical theory in general being the critique of social, historical, and ideological forces and structures; or critical theory as a synonym for a particular strain of Marx-influenced theorization most commonly associated with the Frankfurt School. My position on the former is that we could always use more of it! The latter is problematic to the extent that it takes certain

Marxist dogmas too seriously, though this form of critical theory has also made many worthwhile contributions and I encourage everyone to examine it critically.

With regard to your list of particulars, I would venture that most anarchists (as do I) oppose most forms of social alienation—and especially Taylorism, most anarchists (who are aware of it) agree with Marx's critique of commodity fetishism, most anarchists (who use the word at all) are critical of reification, and most anarchists would not disagree that the labor theory of value works for most purposes when describing capitalism (though not necessarily

for non-capitalist communities). Ideology has many definitions and anarchists are all over the map on whether to use positive, neutral or critical definitions (and many people move from one to the other without even thinking about what they're doing). Some left anarchists use the Marxist approach to ideology, though most anarchists do not. I prefer an unrelenting, anarchist critique of ideology based on Max Stirner's seminal work, *The Ego and Its Own*. Most anarchists would agree with large portions of Marx's analysis of capitalism, but not many agree with any alleged inevitabilities of history. Adorno and Horkheimer's cri-

tique of the culture industry is, of course, important. Most versions of the Marxist base/superstructure dogmas seem to be more misleading than helpful. Few anarchists employ these categories. I never do.

I'm not a humanist. I criticize all moralism and ideology, and the various forms of humanism are heavily entwined with both. The Enlightenment was a complex historical movement that can't be reduced to something that can be easily approved or opposed as a whole, though certain ideological excesses typical of the Enlightenment (worship of Reason, Science, Progress, etc.) are easily disapproved. Many anarchists have historically been confused about the nature of concepts of human nature. This is a concept which deserves to be clarified in an entire essay rather than one line. Postmodernism is not unitary, though I am critical of most of what passes for pomo theory, especially since what is most worthwhile in it has been lifted wholesale from earlier theorists. Many anarchists have always been suspicious of grand narratives, though there have always been others who haven't been critical enough. Foundationalism, no thanks. People are free to create or reject morals. Free will is another subject that needs an essay for proper clarification.

Free market anarchists?

In issue #55, Spring/Summer 2003, pages 65-66 Paul Madore wrote: "I would also like to say that the person who talked about unifying the left and right anarchists has a point. S/He just fails to realize that 'anarcho'-capitalists want businesses to over-run the people without any state to stop them. With capitalism still around, you fail to have freedom. This is why I conclude that they can help us smash the state, but after that, we won't hesitate to free the slaves of their post-capitalist(sic) zones."

I agree that capitalism is antithetical to freedom. I personally would like to entirely destroy all forms of capitalism, money, ownership and class society, for I view these as either being relationships of authority or supportive of relationships of

authority. However, I enjoy a lot of the free market anarchists because they raise a lot of important questions that I don't see anarchists addressing that often. Questions such as—how do we relate with those individuals who hold radically different paradigms and world-views than us, such as people who view certain things as "theirs" and might even be willing to defend this concept by force?

To interact with these individuals in a manner that does not recognize the invisible lines of "property" to us could be quite liberating, but to them it could be tremendously coercive. A lot of the free market anarchists view property as being an essential construct for ensuring the safety and respect of autonomy necessary for a state-less aggression-free society. To them, behaving without the relationship of "property" would be very threatening, it would for them establish a relationship of authority over them.

The issue of "freeing the slaves" becomes quite tricky when dealing with people who hold these mindsets, because the free market anarchists view things in such a way that they see what you call "freeing the slaves" as being the equivalent of forcing people who are engaging in voluntary relationships to behave in new kinds of relationships against their will. This therefore is not "freeing the slaves," it is establishing a new kind of slavery.

I personally see anarchy as not being about "freeing slaves," but as instead being about slaves freeing *themselves*, that is, slaves refusing to be slaves any longer and struggling with others who are on similar trajectories for their mutual liberation. We all change at different rates, and in different directions, thereby resulting in not all of the slaves even necessarily wanting to be free in the first place. You can't force anybody to be free, each person needs to decide for themselves how they want to live. Once one has determined how one wants to live, one can join together with others in order to make it happen. This is obstructed in our current society since the

State and mass society force us all to live in the same way under the threat of violence.

How to deal with the resources and materials needed for our physical survival therefore becomes a tricky issue, for we would be dealing with different groups of people who hold different conceptual paradigms regarding these things. This is why I think that it is important to search for new ways of communicating and interacting with people, to improve our chances of being able to successfully carry out dialogues that result in us all getting our needs met. I am not saying that people should starve or remain enslaved to capital until such a time that productive dialogue can take place. One should not sacrifice one's life or autonomy for anyone or any concept. However, it must be kept in mind that it is vitally important for us to try to find ways to relate with those who view the world radically different from us. For if we don't, conflicts between different groups could degenerate into wars, which could easily result in the establishment of a new State, thereby defeating any kind of anarchist revolution.

In issue #56, Fall/Winter 2003-04, page 65, Iain Mackay wrote: "Finally, on a totally different subject, I would like to make a few comments on (I)An-ok Ta Chai's letter calling for unity between anarchists and 'right anarchists.' As there is no such thing as 'right anarchists' it would be impossible to work with them. By 'right anarchists' I assume it is meant right-wing libertarian capitalists who falsely call themselves anarchists. Given that these people are in favour of private police, property (and so theft), obedience (to private power by wage slaves), private rulers and have blind faith in both private property and the capitalist market, it seems that they and anarchists do not, in fact, share much in common in terms of what we are against. In terms of what we are for, they are against free association, free speech, autonomy, and independent thought if the property owner so decrees. They may be against state pow-

er, but they are in total favour of private power and the means of defending it (e.g. by means of private police). I think its obvious that little in common and we should resist their attempts to appropriate the anarchist name for their authoritarian ideology."

The free market anarchist milieu, much like the anti-capitalist anarchist milieu, is very diverse and often experiences differences in opinion that can be so big that they appear incompatible and irreconcilable. I regret now not having clearly conveyed this in my original letter in issue #54. Some of the free market anarchists do indeed support private police, private law and private prisons. Others are adamantly opposed to all of that. Some support obedience to bosses and landlords, while others instead support relationships of common understanding, common goals and clear agreement. Some support capitalism as being "the best economic system ever invented," others only support private ownership and are indifferent about economic systems. Some free market anarchists are even anti-capitalist, since a lot of the modern-day Mutualists do tend to hang out in the free market anarchist milieu. The free market anarchist milieu is not some homogenous blob where everyone agrees on everything, it varies person by person. The only thing that unites them all is that they are against the State and aggression, and they support private ownership (and even here there is disagreement, since they do not all agree on the same definitions or standards for these terms!).

I view a lot (but certainly not all) of the free market anarchists as genuinely wanting to free themselves from authority, but unfortunately they have trapped themselves in the authority-producing construct of ownership. Given the intense amount of alienation, disrespect of individual autonomy, and aggression that occurs in this society, I can see how they have arrived at a belief in property as a kind of conceptual "do not attack me or try to control me"

sign that they hope will protect them. Most contemporary free market anarchists are just marginalized, misunderstood, young radicals who work shit jobs and live a meager little existence in this society, just like us regular anarchists. They are not capitalist class intellectuals trying to justify their own exploits, nor have they all read or agree with the big-name free market anarchist philosophers (Bastiat, Mises or Rothbard).

In retrospect, for my original letter in issue #54, I regret now having not taken into account nor expressed the great diversity and variety within both the free market anarchist and anti-capitalist anarchist milieus. I also regret having called for a broad-based amorphous "unity"—I see it as being far more useful to approach things on a case-by-case, person-by-person, project-by-project basis. Focusing on a vague abstraction of "unity" distracts us from the nuances and complexities of the reality before us. Finally, I regret using the terms "left" and "right." Both terms really do not apply well to anarchism at all and are not congruent with any vision that is fundamentally anti-State and anti-aggression.

A lot of interesting ideas, high quality research and writing, and fun and inspiring individuals can be found within the free market anarchist milieu. With this being the case, it could be very useful for anarchists to explore this milieu with an open mind and a civil attitude. At the same time, a lot of sexist, authoritarian and outright obnoxious shit can be found within the free market anarchist milieu as well, but this description can equally apply to the anti-capitalist anarchist scene. Basically put, though, I think that it would help us best to approach everything with a critical eye and an aim of truly and deeply understanding things, and to network and work with those whom we see enough commonalities with that we can effectively engage in projects together to bring down the system.

In liberation,
(I)An-ok Ta Chai
anarchots@yahoo.com

Idealized lifestyles

Dear *Anarchy*,

Thanks for the thought provoking Zerzan essay ("Why Primitivism?" #56). One thing that often comes up in critiques

implies a non-homogenized world. This is the well-proven evolutionary, mutual fund method. Diversity is safe. Simplicity is dangerous.

It is the stabilized cultural diversity that once protected the

idealizes. It is the lifestyle. And it is the earth itself. And, if painful sacrifices have to be made to return to or to succeed in this lifestyle, as Ward Churchill says, "It isn't painless now."

Sincerely,
Sky Hiatt
Charlottesville, VA

Gathering of People against Civilization. Toward an Anti-Civilization Network?

During April 31st through May 1st and 2nd there will be a meeting in Catalunya of anarchists against civilization and domination to share projects, experiences, ideas...and maybe to move toward an anti-civilization network of people and groups opposed to civilization.

We have already met the last first of May in Barcelona in a similar way, with pretty good results. This year we want to repeat the same process but go beyond in it the quality, intensity and length of the meeting. The place and the exact program will be exposed some weeks before the event. If you are interested in getting involved it is important that you get in touch with us and give us a conventional or e-mail address to send you the information.

We will be very pleased to receive suggestions, proposals and ideas about the gathering. We are waiting to hear from you!

For a Free and Wild world.

More info: llavorsda@anarchie.net

or: llavors d'anarquia

C/Mestres Casals i

Martorell 18 baixos,

08003 BARCELONA

Spain

of rewilding or primitivism is the idealization of traditional cultures. This "romanticism" is habitually criticized, the author demeaned, even the notion of romanticism itself is commonly disparaged as a curse of the low intellect and almost a taboo.

Such critiques are easily set forth, as it is always possible to find examples of such cultures that were cruel, criminal, anti-environmental, and so on. People suffered. Slavery was common in some past societies, as was war, cannibalism, and human sacrifice. A primitive lifestyle is no guarantee that any particular culture will prove successful morally or that it will even endure. Evolution makes no such promise. But that's not really the point.

The point is, individuated, localized, stable, landed cultures, adapted to their specific environment imply cultural decentralization, diversity of philosophy, language, art, music, architecture, and custom. It

planet from errors that could be "magnified worldwide," (as Marx predicted for the present day). Individual human groups were free to fail or to succeed. As long as diversity prevailed, the overall cultural climate remained healthy.

Our planet is complex. The only historically tested method for learning to live on it is the cultural method—through the generations, through the centuries of uninterrupted multi-generational socio-environmental learning. Only stable cultures can ever hope to learn this way. Once this cycle is disrupted, decay of learning sets in, decay of method, decay of purpose, and ultimately, decay of all systems on which humans have an impact.

Technology and commerce destabilize the primary focus of human social endeavor, and set this corrosive sequence into motion.

Ultimately, it is not the people of the past that primitivism

Technological progress?

Dear J. McQuinn,

Thanks for sending the issues of *Anarchy*. Here is our bulletin, *Los Amigos de Ludd*...

As you can see, in our last bulletin we include a text dedicated to anarchist movement (focussed on the progressivist and protechnology side of anarchism). In fact, we have sent the bulletin to several anarchist groups with the intention of opening a discussion concerning this subject (we expect answers...). Nevertheless, we have recently organized some debates with young anarchists in Madrid, considering this kind of interchange quite necessary. As you can see our text starts with a David Watson quotation (we see that you are not very fond of *Fifth Estate*, Watson's views, etc.) As you might know Watson's writings against industrial society have been recently published in Spain (this edition does not include political contributions). We must confess that we've received some issues of *Fifth Estate*, but we have not yet read Watson's points of view about the Balkan war, etc. We find Watson's essays on/against industrial society quite penetrating but we cannot say very much about the rest of his views. (It is obvious for us that there are no humanitarian wars whatsoever, and neither do we believe that any war can move towards revolutionary situations in a mechanical way.)

We would like to know your opinion about anarchism and technological progress (which is the subject of our essay).

Salud,
Los Amigos de Ludd
C/Ave María 39 -2ºDcha Ext.
28012 Madrid
Spain

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Anarchy #13 [Weekly World Anarchy issue] (20pp. tabloid) [Fall-Winter '86] Includes Murray Bookchin's "Theses on Libertarian Municipalism."

Anarchy #14 (28pp. tabloid) [Summer '87] Includes John Zerzan's "Vagaries of Negation," & "Intervention in Vietnam & Central America" by Noam Chomsky.

Anarchy #15 (32pp. tabloid) [Winter '88] Includes "The Realization & Suppression of Religion" by Ken Knabb.

Anarchy #16 (32pp. tabloid) [Summer '88] Includes Holly's "My life in the Porn Biz," Paula Webster's "Pornography and Pleasure" & more "Anarchy & Religion."

Anarchy #17 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall-Winter '88-89] Includes "Who Killed Ned Ludd?" by John Zerzan & "The Freedom of Biocentrism" by Lone Wolf Circles.

Anarchy #18 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '89] Includes "Bigger Cages, Longer Chains."

Anarchy #19 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [May-July '89] Special issue on "Children's Sexuality."

Anarchy #20/21 Double issue (48pp. tabloid mag.) [Aug.-October '89] Includes Richard Walters' "Whatever Happened to the Sexual Revolution," "Jealousy" by Isaac Cronin & Kevin Keating's fiction, "The Man in the Box."

Anarchy #22 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [Nov.-Dec. '89] Features "In Search of the New Age" by Janos Nehek.

Anarchy #23 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Jan.-Feb. '89] Includes "The Population Myth" by Murray Bookchin & Noam Chomsky's "Propaganda American-Style."

Anarchy #24 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '90] Includes "Misinformation and Manipulation: An Anarchist Critique of the Politics of AIDS" by Joe Peacock, and a discussion of "Anarchy & the Sacred" by D. Campion, F. Faun & Chernyi.

Anarchy #25 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Summer '90] Includes "The Mass Psychology of Misery" by John Zerzan.

Anarchy #26 (40pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall '90] Anti-work issue & Kevin Keating's "The Good, The Bad and The Angry."

Anarchy #27 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Winter '90-91] Special "Free the Kids" issue.

Anarchy #28 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Spring '91] Includes Charlatan Stew's "Myths of the Anti-War Movement" & James Koehnline's "Great Dismal Maroons."

Anarchy #29 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Summer '91] Special issue on "The Situationists and Beyond..."

Anarchy #30 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall '91] Includes John Zerzan's "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism."

Anarchy #31 (44pp. tabloid mag.) [Winter '92] Special issue on "Women, Gender & Anarchy."

Anarchy #32 (44pp. tabloid mag.) [Spring '92] Special issue on "Libertarian Fiction."

Anarchy #33 (88pp. magazine) [Summer '92] Special issue on "Abandoning Civilization," includes John Zerzan's "Future Primitive," Fredy Perlman's "Against His-Story," & Ward Churchill's "Deconstructing Columbus."

Anarchy #34 (88pp., magazine) [Fall '92] Includes Nick DiSpolito's on prison life and Max Anger on the L.A. Riot.

Anarchy #35 (84pp., magazine) [Winter '93] Includes M.A. Jaimes' "The Stone Age Revisited" & part 1 of Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

Anarchy #36 (84pp., magazine) [Spring '93] Includes Michael William's "Bisexuality" and part 2 of Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

Anarchy #37 (84pp., magazine) [Summer '93] Includes Fredy Perlman's "The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism."

Anarchy #38 (84pp., magazine) [Fall '93] Includes "For a World without Morality" from *La Banquise* and "In the Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War" by Manolo Gonzalez.

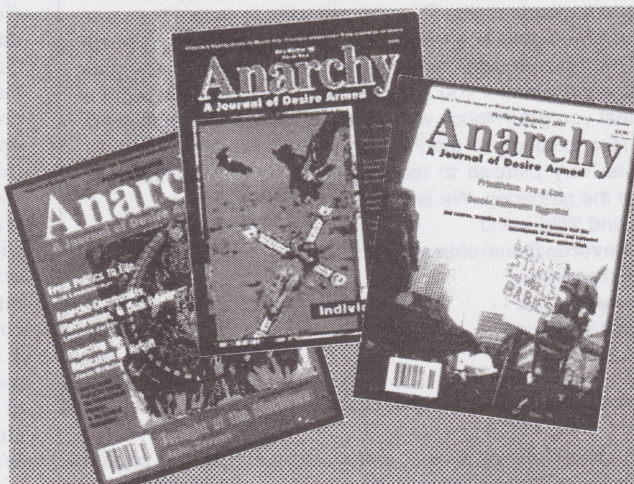
Anarchy #39 (84pp., magazine) [Winter '94] Includes John Zerzan's "Time and Its Discontents," Manolo Gonzalez on "The Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, Pt.2" & Neal Keating's "Rioting & Looting as a Modern Potlatch."

Anarchy #40 (100pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '94] Includes Michael Williams' "The Ecology Montreal Party: A Libertarian Frankenstein," & an interview on non-monogamy.

Anarchy #41 (84pp., magazine) [Winter '95] Special issue on "Individualism," includes "On Max Stirner," excerpts from "The Right to Be Greedy," & Doug Imrie on "The Illegalists."

Anarchy #42 (84pp., magazine) [Fall '95] Includes Hakim Bey's "Primitives & Extopians," Paul Simons' "New Model Army," Octavio Alberola on the revolt in "Baja California."

Anarchy #43 (64pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '97] Includes John Zerzan's "Running on Emptiness" Bob Black on Bookchin & Laure Akai's "In Search of the Unabomber."



Anarchy #44 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter '97-8] Includes Len Bracken on "Guy Debord in Paris, '68," & Paul Simons' new afterword for Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal*.

Anarchy #45 (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '98] Includes Brian Morris on "Anthropology & Anarchism," an interview with Manolo Gonzalez, & John Zerzan on reification.

Anarchy #46 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter '98-9] Includes Charles Reeve's "Unemployed Struggles in France," & Reeve & Deneuve's "Behind the Balaclavas of the Mexican Southeast."

Anarchy #47 (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer '99] Includes part 1 of Michael Williams' "Collapse of the Ecology Montreal Party," & Paul Simons on "The Paris Commune."

Anarchy #48 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter '99-2000] Features a discussion on "Post-Left Anarchy" by Alex Trotter, Lawrence Jarach, John Zerzan and Manolo Gonzalez.

Anarchy #49 (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2000] Features Lawrence Jarach and Jonathan Slyk on Seattle's anti-WTO protests, as well as John Zerzan's "Age of Nihilism."

Anarchy #50 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2000-2001] Features Lawrence Jarach's "My Date with the North American Anarchist Conference," & an interview with the AK Collective.

Anarchy #51 (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2001] Features a discussion of "Primitivism: Pro & Con," along with "Disarm Authority! Arm Your Desires!" and John Spencer on advocates of urban guerrilla warfare in Quebec.

Anarchy #52 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2001-2002] Features Michael Kolhoffs' "Fugitive Nation," the continuing discussion of "Primitivism," & John Zerzan's "Now Way Out."

Anarchy #53 (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2002] Features "The Legend of the Squamish Five" by Jonathan Slyk, "Instead of a Meeting" by Lawrence Jarach, and Kevin Keating on "The Mission Yuppie Eradication Project"

Anarchy #54 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2002-2003] Features John Zerzan's "Twilight of the Machines," Wolfi Landstreicher's "From Politics to Life," & Jason McQuinn's "Rejecting the Reification of Revolt."

Anarchy #55 (84pp., magazine) [Spring/Summer 2003] Features Stuart Christie on "Anarchist Collaboration with the State in the Spanish Civil War," and Jason McQuinn on "The Anti-Anarchist Rhetoric of Leftism."

Anarchy #56 (84pp., magazine) [Fall/Winter 2003-2004] Features Ron Sakolsky on "Surrealist Desire, Anarchy, and the Poetry of Revolt," & John Zerzan's "Why Primitivism?"

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Anarchy is a journal of *desire armed*! Neither left nor right, just uncompromisingly anti-authoritarian. **Anarchy** aims to help create a genuinely different alternative vision—radically cooperative & communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild—a liberatory vision free from the constraints of our own human self-domestication.

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